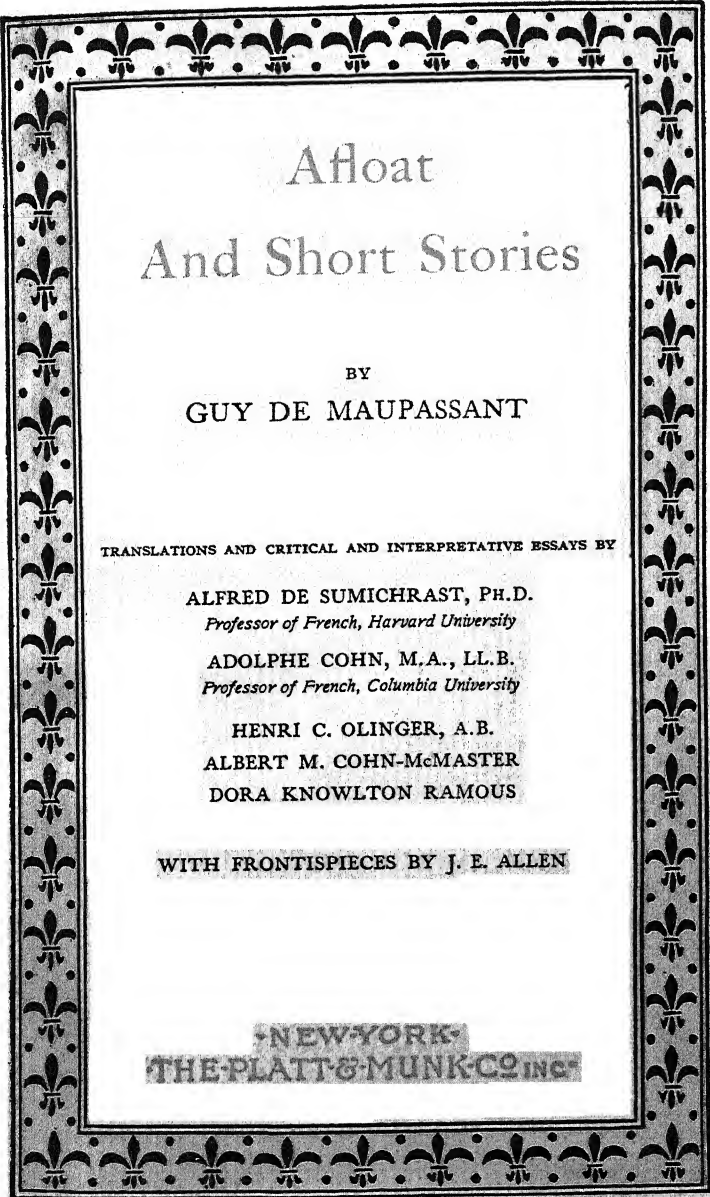


HE WAS THE FIRST TO COME TO THIS LAST MEETING PLACE.



# Afloat And Short Stories

BY  
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## INTRODUCTION

*This Diary contains no story and no very thrilling adventure. While cruising about on the coasts of the Mediterranean last spring, I amused myself by writing down every day what I saw and what I thought.*

*I saw only the water, the sun, clouds, and rocks—I can tell of naught else—and my thoughts were mere nothings, such as are suggested by the rocking of the waves, lulling and bearing one along.*



## AFLOAT

### CHAPTER I

#### THE TOMB OF PAGANINI

*April 6th.*



WAS sound asleep when my skipper Bernard awoke me by throwing up sand at my window. I opened it, and on my face, on my chest, I felt the cold, delicious breath of the night. The sky was a clear blue-gray, and alive with the quivering fire of the stars.

The sailor, standing at the foot of the wall, said:

"Fine weather, sir."

"What wind?"

"Off shore."

"Very well, I'm coming."

Half an hour later I was hurrying down to the shore. The horizon was pale with the first rays of dawn, and I saw in the distance behind the Bay des Anges the lights at Nice, and still farther on the revolving lighthouse at Villefranche.

In front of me Antibes was dimly visible through the lifting darkness, with its two towers rising above the cone-shaped town, surrounded by the old walls built by Vauban.

In the streets were a few dogs and a few men,

workmen starting off to their daily labor. In the port nothing but the gentle swaying of the boats at the side of the quay and the soft plashing of the scarcely moving water could be heard; or at times the sound of the straining of a cable or of a boat grazing against the hull of a vessel. The boats, the flagstones, the sea itself seemed asleep under the gold-spangled firmament, and under the eye of a small lighthouse which, standing out at the end of the jetty, kept watch over its little harbor.

Beyond, in front of Ardouin's building yard, I saw a glimmer, I felt a stir, I heard voices. They were expecting me. The *Bel-Ami* was ready to start.

I went down into the cabin, lighted up by a couple of candles hanging and balanced like compasses, at the foot of the sofas which at night were used as beds. I donned the leathern sailor's jacket, put on a warm cap, and returned on deck. Already the hawsers had been cast off, and the two men hauling in the cable had brought the anchor apeak. Then they hoisted the big sail, which went up slowly to the monotonous groan of blocks and rigging. It rose wide and wan in the darkness of the night, quivering in the breath of the wind, hiding from us both sky and stars.

The breeze was coming dry and cold from the invisible mountain that one felt to be still laden with snow. It came very faint, as though hardly awake, undecided and intermittent.

Then the men shipped the anchor, I seized the helm, and the boat, like a big ghost, glided through the still waters. In order to get out of the port, we had to tack between the sleeping tartans and schooners. We went gently from one quay to an-

other, dragging after us our little round dingy, which followed us as a cygnet, just hatched from its shell, follows the parent swan.

As soon as we reached the channel between the jetty and the square fort, the yacht became livelier, quickened its pace, and seemed more alert, as though a joyous feeling had taken possession of her. She danced over the countless short waves—moving furrows of a boundless plain. Quitting the dead waters of the harbor, she now felt under her the living sea.

There was no swell, and I directed our course between the walls of the town and the buoy called Cing-cents francs (twenty pounds sterling) that marks the deeper channel; then, catching the breeze astern, I made sail to double the headland.

The day was breaking, the stars were disappearing, for the last time the Villefranche lighthouse closed its revolving eye, and I saw strange roseate glimmers in the distant sky, above the still invisible Nice; the heights of the Alpine glaciers lighted up by the early dawn. I gave the helm over to Bernard, and watched the rising sun. The freshened breeze sent us skimming over the quivering, violet-tinted waters. A bell clanged, throwing to the wind the three rapid strokes of the Angelus. How is it that the sound of bells seems livelier in the early dawn, and heavier at nightfall? I like that chill and keen hour of morn; when man still sleeps and all nature is awakening. The air is full of mysterious thrills unknown to belated risers. I inhale, I drink it; I see all life returning, the material life of the world; the life that runs through all the planets, the secret of which is our eternal puzzle.



Raymond said:

"We shall soon have the wind from the east."

Bernard replied:

"More likely from the west."

The skipper Bernard is lean and lithe, remarkably clean, careful, and prudent. Bearded up to his eyes, he has a frank look and a kindly voice. He is devoted and trusty. But everything makes him anxious at sea; a sudden swell that foretells a breeze out at sea, a long cloud over the Esterel mountains announcing a *mistral* to westward, even a rising barometer, for that may indicate a squall from the east. Moreover, a capital sailor, he exercises a constant supervision and carries cleanliness to such an extent as to rub up the brasses the moment a drop of water had touched them.

His brother-in-law, Raymond, is a strong fellow, swarthy and mustached, indefatigable and bold, as loyal and devoted as the other, but less variable and nervous, more calm, more resigned to the surprises and treachery of the sea. Bernard, Raymond, and the barometer are sometimes in contradiction with each other, and perform an amusing comedy with three personages, of which one, the best informed, is dumb.

"Dash it, sir, we're sailing well," said Bernard.

We had, it was true, passed through the gulf of La Salis, cleared La Garoupe, and were approaching Cape Gros, a flat, low rock stretching out on a level with the water.

Now, the whole Alpine mountain range appeared, a monster wave threatening the sea, a granite wave capped with snow, where each pointed tip looks like a dash of spray motionless and frozen. And the sun

rises behind this ice, shedding over it the light of its molten silver rays.

Then directly after, as we round the Antibes headland, we discover the Lerins Isles, and farther off behind them the tortuous outline of the Esterel. The Esterel is the stage scenery of Cannes, a lovely keepsake kind of mountain of faintest blue, elegantly outlined in a coquettish and yet artistic style, washed in water-colors on a theatrical sky by a good-natured Creator for the express purpose of serving as model for English lady landscape painters, and as a subject of admiration for consumptive or idle royal highnesses.

With each hour of the day, the Esterel changes its aspect, and charms the gaze of the upper ten.

In the morning the chain of mountains, correctly and clearly cut out, is sharply delineated on a blue sky; a tender and pure blue, the ideal blue of a southern shore. But in the evening the wooded sides of the slopes darken and become a black patch on a fiery sky, on a sky incredibly red and dramatic. Never have I seen elsewhere such fairylike sunsets, such conflagrations of the whole horizon, such an effulgence of clouds, such a clever and superb arrangement, such a daily renewal of extravagant and magnificent effects which call forth admiration, but would raise a smile were they painted by men.

The Lerins Isles, which to the east close the Gulf of Cannes and separate it from the Gulf of Juan, look themselves like two operatic islands placed there for the satisfaction and delight of the invalid and winter sojourners.

Seen from the open sea, where we now are, they resemble two dark-green gardens growing in the water. Out at sea, at the extreme end of Saint-

Honorat, stands a romantic ruin, its walls rising out of the waves, quite one of Walter Scott's castles, ever beaten by the surf, and in which, in former days, the monks defended themselves against the Saracens; for Saint-Honorat always belonged to monks, except during the Revolution. At that period the island was purchased by an actress of the Comédie-Française.

Stronghold, militant monks, now toned down into the fattest of smilingly begging Trappists; pretty actress, come thither, no doubt, to conceal her love affairs in the dense thickets and pines of this rock-belted islet; all, down to the very names: "Lerins, Saint-Honorat, Sainte-Marguerite," fit for Florian's fables, all is pleasing, coquettish, romantic, poetic, and rather insipid on the delightful shores of Cannes.

To correspond with the antique manor, embattled, slender and erect, which looks toward the open sea at the extremity of Saint-Honorat, Sainte-Marguerite is terminated on the land side by the celebrated fortress in which the Man in the Iron Mask and Bazaine were confined. A channel about a mile long stretches out between the headland of the Croisette and the fortress, which has the aspect of an old squat house, devoid of anything imposing or majestic. It seems to crouch down, dull and sly, a real trap for prisoners.

I can now see the three gulfs. In front, beyond the islands, lies that of Cannes; nearer, the Gulf Juan, and behind the Bay des Anges, overtopped by the Alps and the snowy heights. Farther off, the coasts can be seen far beyond the Italian frontier, and with my glasses I can sight at the end of a promontory the white houses of Bordighera.

And everywhere, all along the endless coast, the towns by the seashore, the villages perched up on high on the mountainside, the innumerable villas dotted about in the greenery, all look like white eggs laid on the sands, laid on the rocks, laid among the pine forests by gigantic birds that have come in the night from the snowlands far above.

Villas again on the Cape of Antibes, a long tongue of land, a wonderful garden thrown out between the seas, blooming with the most lovely flowers of Europe, and at the extreme point Eileen Rock, a charming and whimsical residence that attracts visitors from Cannes and Nice.

The breeze has dropped, the yacht hardly makes any progress. After the current of land wind that lasts all night, we are waiting and hoping for a whiff of sea air, which will be most welcome, wherever it may blow from.

Bernard still believes in a west wind, Raymond in an east one, and the barometer remains motionless at a little above 76.

The sun, now radiant, overspreads the earth, making the walls of the houses sparkle from afar like scattered snow, and sheds over the sea a light varnish of luminous blue.

Little by little, taking advantage of the faintest breath, of those caresses of the air which one can hardly feel on the skin, but to which, nevertheless, lively and well-trimmed yachts glide through the still waters, we sail beyond the last point of the headland, and the whole Gulf of Juan, with the squadron in the center of it, lies before us.

From afar, the ironclads look like rocks, islets, and reefs covered with dead trees. The smoke of a train runs along the shore between Cannes and

Juan-les-Pins, which will perhaps become later on the prettiest place on the whole coast.

Three tartans, with their lateen sails, one red and the other two white are detained in the channel between Sainte-Harguerite and the mainland.

All is still, the soft and warm calm of a morning's springtide in the south; and already it seems to me as if I had left weeks ago, months ago, years ago, the talking, busy world; I feel arise within me the intoxication of solitude, the sweet delights of a rest that nothing will disturb, neither the white letter nor the blue telegram, nor the bell at my door, nor the bark of my dog. I cannot be sent for, invited, carried off, overwhelmed by sweet smiles, or harassed by civilities. I am alone, really alone, really free. The smoke of the train runs along the seaside; while I float in a winged home that is rocked and cradled; pretty as a bird, tiny as a nest, softer than a hammock, wandering over the waters at the caprice of the wind, independent and free! To attend to me and sail my boat, I have two sailors at my call, and books and provisions for a fortnight.

A whole fortnight without speaking, what joy! Overcome by the heat of the sun, I closed my eyes, enjoying the deep repose of the sea, when Bernard said in an undertone:

"The brig over there has a good breeze."

Over there it was true, far away in front of Agay, a brig was advancing toward us; I could distinctly see with my glasses her rounded sails puffed out by the wind.

"Pooh, it's the breeze from Agay," answered Raymond; "it is calm round Cape Roux."

"Talk away; we shall have a west wind," replied Bernard.

I leaned over to look at the barometer in the saloon. It had fallen during the last half hour. I told Bernard, who smiled and whispered:

"It feels like a westerly wind, sir."

And now my curiosity awakens; the curiosity special to all those who wander over the sea, which makes them see everything, notice everything, and take an interest in the smallest detail. My glasses no longer leave my eyes; I look at the color of the water on the horizon. It remains clear, varnished, unruffled. If there is a breeze, it is still far off.

What a personage the wind is for the sailors! They speak of it as of a man, an all-powerful sovereign, sometimes terrible and sometimes kindly. It is the main topic of conversation all the day through, and it is the subject of one's incessant thoughts throughout the days and nights. You land folk know it not! As for us, we know it better than our father or our mother, the invisible, the terrible, the capricious, the sly, the treacherous, the devouring tyrant. We love it and we dread it; we know its maliciousness and its anger, which the warnings in the heavens or in the depths slowly teach us to anticipate. It forces us to think of it at every minute, at every second, for the struggle between it and us is indeed ceaseless. All our being is on the alert for the battle; our eye to detect undiscernible appearances; our skin to feel its caress or its blow, our spirit to recognize its mood, foresee its caprices, judge whether it is calm or wayward. No enemy, no woman gives us so powerful a sensation of struggle, nor compels us to so much foresight, for it is the master of the sea, it is that thing



which we may avoid, make use of, or fly from, but which we can never subdue. And there reigns in the soul of a sailor, as in that of a believer, the idea of an irascible and formidable God, the mysterious, religious, infinite fear of the wind, and respect for its power.

"Here it comes, sir," Bernard said to me.

Far away, very far away, at the end of the horizon, a blue-black line lengthens out on the water. It is nothing, a shade, an imperceptible shadow; it is the wind. Now we await it motionless, under the heat of the sun.

I look at the time, eight o'clock, and I say:

"Bless me, it is early for the westerly wind."

"It will blow hard in the afternoon," replied Bernard.

I raised my eyes to the sail hanging flat, loose, and inert. Its great triangle seemed to reach up to the sky, for we had hoisted on the foremast the great fine-weather gaff topsail, and its yard overtopped the masthead by quite two yards. All is motionless; we might be on land. The barometer is still falling. However, the dark line perceived afar approaches. The metallic luster of the waters is suddenly dimmed and transformed into a slaty shade. The sky is pure and cloudless.

Suddenly, around us the polished surface of the sea is rippled by imperceptible shivers gliding rapidly over it, appearing but to be effaced, as though it were riddled by a rain of thousands of little pinches of sand.

The sail quivers slightly, and presently the main boom slowly lurches over to starboard. A light breath now caresses my face, and the shivers on the water increase around us, as though the rain of

sand had become continuous. The cutter begins to move forward. She glides on upright, and a slight splash makes itself heard along her sides. I feel the tiller stiffen in my hand, that long brass cross-bar which looks in the sun like a fiery stem, and the breeze steadily increases. We shall have to tack, but what matter; the boat sails close to the wind, and if the breeze holds, we shall be able to beat up to Saint-Raphaël before the sun goes down.

We now approach the squadron whose six iron-clads and two despatch boats turn slowly at their anchors, with their bows to the west. Then we tack toward the open sea, to pass the Formigues rocks, which are marked by a tower in the middle of the gulf. The breeze freshens more and more with surprising rapidity, and the waves rise up short and choppy. The yacht bends low under her full set of sails, and runs on, followed by the dingy, which with stretched-out painter is hurried through the foam, her nose in the air and stern in the water.

On nearing the island of Saint-Honorat we pass by a naked rock, red and bristling like a porcupine, so rugged, so armed with teeth, points, and claws as to be well-nigh impossible of access; and one must advance with precaution, placing one's feet in the hollows between the tusks: it is called Saint-Ferréol.

A little earth, come from no one knows where, has accumulated in the holes and crevasses of the rock, and lilies grow in it, and beautiful blue irises, from seeds which seem to have fallen from heaven.

It is on this strange reef, in the open sea, that for five years lay buried and unknown the body of Paganini. The adventure is worthy of this artist, whose queer character, at once genial and weird,

gave him the reputation of being possessed by the devil, and who, with his odd appearance in body and face, his marvelous talent and excessive emaciation, has become an almost legendary being, a sort of Hoffmannesque phantasm.

As he was on his way home to Genoa, his native town, accompanied by his son, who alone could hear him now, so weak had his voice become, he died at Nice of cholera, on the 27th of May, 1840.

The son at once took the body of his father on board a ship and set sail for Italy. But the Genoese clergy refused to give burial to the demoniac. The court of Rome was consulted, but dared not grant the authorization. The body was, however, about to be debarked, when the municipal powers made opposition, under the pretext that the artist had died of cholera. Genoa was at that time ravaged by an epidemic of this disease, and it was argued that the presence of this new corpse might possibly aggravate the evil.

Paganini's son then returned to Marseilles, where entrance to the port was refused him for the same reasons. He then went on to Cannes, where he could not penetrate either.

He therefore remained at sea, and the waves rocked the corpse of the fantastic artist, everywhere repelled by men. He no longer knew what to do, where to go, on which spot to lay the dead body so sacred to him, when he espied the naked rock of Saint-Ferréol in the midst of the billows. There at last he landed the coffin, and buried it in the center of the islet.

It was only in 1845 that he went back with two of his friends to take up the remains of his father, and transfer them to Genoa to the Villa Gajona.

Would one not have preferred that the extraordinary violinist should have remained at rest upon the bristling reef, cradled by the song of the waves as they break on the torn and craggy rock?

Farther on, in the open sea, rises the castle of Saint-Honorat, which we had already perceived as we rounded the Cape of Antibes, and farther on still, a line of reefs ended by a tower called Les Moines.

They are now quite white with surf and echoing with the roar of the breakers.

They form one of the most dangerous perils of the coast during the night, for they are marked by no light, and they are the cause of frequent wrecks.

A sudden gust heels us over, so that the water washes the deck, and I give orders for the gaff topsail to be lowered, the cutter being no longer able to carry it without endangering the safety of the mast.

The waves sink, swell, and whiten; the wind whistles, ill-tempered and squally—a threatening wind, which cries, “Take care!”

“We shall have to go and sleep at Cannes,” said Bernard.

And, in fact, at the end of half an hour, we had to lower the standing jib, and replace it by a smaller one, taking a reef in the sail at the same time; then a quarter of an hour later we had to take in a second reef. Thereupon I decided to make for the harbor at Cannes, a dangerous harbor, without shelter; a roadstead open to the southwesterly sea, where the ships are in constant danger. When one thinks what a considerable amount of wealth would accrue to the town by the large number of foreign yachts that would flock there were they certain of finding

a proper shelter, one understands how inveterate must be the indolence of this southern population, who have not yet been able to obtain from government such indispensable works. At ten o'clock we dropped anchor opposite the steamboat *Le Cannois*, and I landed, thoroughly disappointed at the interruption of my trip. The whole roadstead was white with foam.



## CHAPTER II

### THE PARADISE OF PRINCES

CANNES, *April 7th, 9 P. M.*



RINCES, princes, everywhere princes. They who love princes are indeed happy.

No sooner had I set foot yesterday morning on the promenade of the Croisette than I met three, one behind the other. In our democratic country, Cannes has become the city of titles.

If one could open minds in the same manner as one lifts the cover off a saucepan, one would find figures in the brain of the mathematician; outlines of actors gesticulating and declaiming in a theatrical author's head; the form of a woman in that of a lover's; licentious pictures in that of a rake; verses in the brain of a poet; and in the cranium of the folk who comes to Cannes there would be found coronets of every description, floating about like vermicelli in soup.



Some men gather together in gambling houses because they are fond of cards, others meet on race courses because they are fond of horses. People gather together at Cannes because they love imperial and royal highnesses.

There they are at home, and, in default of the kingdoms of which they have been dispossessed, reign peacefully in the salons of the faithful.

Great and small, poor and rich, sad and gay, all are to be found, according to taste. In general they are modest, strive to please, and show in their intercourse with humbler mortals a delicacy and affability that is hardly ever found in our own *députés*, those princes of the ballot.

However, if the princes, the poor wandering princes without subjects or civil list, who come to live in homely fashion in this town of flowers and elegance, affect simplicity, and do not lay themselves open to ridicule, even from those most disrespectfully inclined, such is not the case with regard to the worshipers of highnesses.

These latter circle round their idols with an eagerness at once religious and comical; and directly they are deprived of one, they fly off in quest of another, as though their mouths could only open to say "Monseigneur" or "Madame," and speak in the third person.

They cannot be with you five minutes without telling you what the princess replied, what the grand duke said; the promenade planned with the one, the witty saying of the other. One feels, one sees, one guesses that they frequent no other society but that of persons of royal blood, and if they deign to speak to you, it is in order to inform you exactly of what takes place on these heights.

What relentless struggles, struggles in which every possible ruse is employed in order to have at one's table, at least once during the season, a prince, a real prince, one of those at a premium. What respect one inspires when one has met a grand duke at lawn tennis, or when one has merely been presenter to Wales—as the “ mashers ” say.

To write down one's name at the door of these “ exiles,” as Daudet calls them, of these tumble-down princes, as others would say, creates a constant, delicate, absorbing, and engrossing occupation. The visitor's book lies open in the hall between a couple of lackeys, one of whom proffers a pen. One inscribes one's name at the tag end of some two thousand names of every sort and description, among which titles swarm and the noble particle “ de ” abounds! After which, one goes off with the haughty air of a man just ennobled, as happy as one who has accomplished a sacred duty, and one proudly says to the first person met: “ I have just written down my name at the Grand Duke of Gerolstein's! ” Then, in the evening, at dinner, one says in an important tone: “ I noticed just now, on the Grand Duke of Gerolstein's list, the names of X——, Y——, and Z——.” And every one is interested and listens as if the event were of the greatest importance.

But why laugh and be astonished at the harmless and innocent mania of the elegant admirers of princes when we meet in Paris fifty different races of hero worshipers who are in no wise less amusing?

Whoever has a salon must needs have some celebrities to show there, and a hunt is organized in order to secure them. There is hardly a woman

in society and of the best who is not anxious to have her artist or her artists; and she will give dinners for them in order that the whole world may know that hers is a clever set.

Between affecting to possess the wit one has not, but which one summons with a flourish of trumpets, or affecting princely intimacies—where is the difference?

Among the great men most sought after by women, old and young, are most assuredly musicians. Some houses possess a complete collection of them. Moreover, these artists possess the inestimable advantage of being useful in the evening parties. However, people who desire a superlative *rara avis* can hardly hope to bring two together in the same room. We may add that there is not a meanness of which any woman, a leader of society, is not capable, in order to embellish her salon with a celebrated composer. The delicate attentions usually employed to secure a painter or only a literary man become quite inadequate when the subject is a tradesman of sounds. For him allurements and praise hitherto unknown are employed. His hands are kissed like those of a king, he is worshiped as a god, when he has deigned to execute his *Regina Cæli*. A hair of his beard is worn in a ring; a button fallen from his breeches one evening in a violent movement of his arm, during the execution of the grand finale of his *Doux Repos*, becomes a medal, a sacred medal worn in the bosom, hanging from a golden chain.

Painters are of less value, although still rather sought after. They are not so divine and more Bohemian. Their manners are less courteous and, above all, not sufficiently sublime. They often re-

place inspiration by broad jests and silly puns. They carry with them too much of the perfume of the studio, and those who by dint of watchfulness have managed to get rid of it only exchange one odor for another, that of affectation. And then they are a fickle, light, and bragging set. No one is certain of keeping them long, whereas the musician builds his nest in the family circle.

Of late years the literary man has been sought after. He presents many great advantages: he talks, he talks lengthily, he talks a great deal, his conversation suits every kind of public, and as his profession is to be intelligent, he can be listened to and admired in all security.

The woman who is possessed with the mania for having at her house a literary man, just as one would have a parrot whose chatter should attract all the neighboring *concierges*, has to take her choice between poets and novelists. There is more of the ideal about the poet, more spontaneity about the novelist. The poets are more sentimental, the novelists more positive. It is a matter of taste and constitution. The poet has more charm, the novelist has often more wit. But the novelist presents dangers that are not met with in the poet: he pries, pillages, and makes capital of all he sees. With him there is no tranquillity, no certainty that he will not some day lay you bare in the pages of a book. His eye is like a pump that sucks up everything, like the hand of a thief that is always at work. Nothing escapes him; he gathers and picks up ceaselessly; he notices the movements, the gestures, the intentions, the slightest incidents and events; he picks up the smallest words, the smallest actions, the smallest thing. He makes stock from

morning till night of these observations, out of which he will make a good telling story, a story that will make the round of the world, which will be read, discussed, commented upon by thousands and thousands of people. And the most terrible part of all is that the wretch cannot help drawing striking portraits, in spite of himself, unconsciously, because he sees things as they are, and he must relate what he sees. Notwithstanding the cunning he uses in disguising his personages, it will be said: "Did you recognize Mr. X—— and Mrs. Y——? They are striking resemblances."

It is assuredly as dangerous for people in good society to invite and make much of novelists as it would be for a miller to breed rats in his mill.

And yet they are held in great favor.

When, therefore, a woman has fixed her choice on the writer she intends to adopt, she lays siege to him by means of every variety of compliments, attractions, and indulgence. Like water which, drop by drop, slowly wears away the hardest rock, the fulsome praise falls at each word on the impressionable heart of the literary man. Then, when she sees that he is moved, touched, and won by the constant flattery, she isolates him, severing, little by little, the ties he may have elsewhere, and imperceptibly accustoms him to come to her house, make himself happy, and there enshrine his thoughts. In order the more thoroughly to acclimatize him in her house, she paves the way for his success, brings him forward, sets him in relief, and displays for him, before all the old *habitués* of the household, marked consideration and boundless admiration.

At last, realizing that he is now an idol, he remains in the temple. He finds, moreover, that the

position affords him every advantage, for all the other women lavish their most delicate favors upon him to entice him away from his conqueror. If, however, he is clever, he will not hearken to the entreaties and coquetries with which he is overwhelmed. And the more faithful he appears, the more he will be sought after, implored, and loved. Ah! let him beware of allowing these drawing-room sirens to entice him away; he will immediately lose two-thirds of his value if he once becomes public property.

Soon he forms a literary circle, a church of which he is the deity, the only deity, for true faiths never have more than one God. People will flock to the house to see him, to hear him, to admire him, as one comes from afar to visit certain shrines. He will be envied! She will be envied! They will converse upon literature as priests talk of dogmas, scientifically and solemnly; they will be listened to, both the one and the other, and on leaving this literary salon, one will feel as though one were quitting a cathedral.

Other men are also sought after, but in a lesser degree; for instance, generals, who, neglected by society and not held in much greater consideration than *députés*, are yet in demand among the middle classes. The *député* is only in request at moments of crisis. He is kept on hand by a dinner now and then during a parliamentary lull. The scholar has also his partisans—every variety of taste exists in nature; and a clerk in office is himself highly esteemed by folk who live up six pairs of stairs. However, this sort of people do not come to Cannes; there are only a few timid representatives to be seen of the middle class.



It is only before twelve o'clock that the noble visitors are to be met on the Croisette.

The Croisette is a long semi-circular promenade that follows the line of the beach, from the headland in front of Sainte-Marguerite down to the harbor overlooked by the old town.

Young and slender women—it is good style to be thin—dressed in the English fashion, walk along with rapid step, escorted by active young men in lawn-tennis suits. But from time to time appears some poor emaciated creature, dragging himself along with languid step, and leaning on the arm of a mother, brother, or sister. He coughs and gasps, poor thing, wrapped up in shawls notwithstanding the heat, and watches us, as we pass, with deep, despairing, and envious glances.

He suffers and dies, for this charming and balmy country is the hospital of society and the flowery cemetery of aristocratic Europe.

The terrible disease which never relents, and is now called tuberculosis, the disease that gnaws, burns, and destroys men by thousands, seems to have chosen this coast on which to finish off its victims.

How truly in every part of the world this lovely and terrible spot must be accursed, this anteroom of death, perfumed and sweet, where so many humble or royal families, burghers or princes, have left some one, some child on whom they concentrated all their hopes, and lavished all their love and tenderness.

I call to mind Mentone, the warmest and healthiest of these winter residences. Even as in warlike cities the fortresses can be seen standing out on the surrounding heights, so in this region of mori-

bunds the cemetery is visible on the summit of a hill.

What a spot it would be for the living, that garden where the dead lie asleep! Roses, roses, everywhere roses. They are blood-red, or pale, or white, or streaked with veins of scarlet. The tombs, the paths, the places still unoccupied and which to-morrow will be filled, all are covered with them. Their strong perfume brings giddiness, making both head and legs falter.

And all those who lie there were but sixteen, eighteen, or twenty years of age.

One wanders on from tomb to tomb, reading the names of those youthful victims, killed by the implacable disease. 'Tis a children's cemetery, a cemetery similar to the young girls' balls where no married couples are admitted.

From the cemetery the view extends to the left in the direction of Italy as far as the Bordighera headland, where the white houses stretch out into the sea; and to the right as far as Cape Martin, which dips its leafy coast in the water.

Nevertheless all around, all along these delightful shores, we are in the home of Death. But it is discreet, veiled, full of tact and bashfulness, well bred in fact. Never does one meet it face to face, although at every moment it passes near.

It might even be thought that no one dies in this country, so thorough is the complicity of deceit in which this sovereign revels. But how it is felt, how it is detected; how often a glimpse is caught of its black robes! Truly, all the roses and the orange blossoms are requisite, to prevent the breeze being laden with the dread smell which is exhaled from the chamber of death.

Never is a coffin seen in the streets, never any funeral trappings, never is a death-knell heard. Yesterday's emaciated pedestrian no longer passes beneath your window, and that is all. If you are astonished at no longer seeing him, and inquire after him, the landlord and servants tell you with a smile that he had got better and by the doctor's advice had left for Italy. In each hotel Death has its secret stairs, its confidants, and its accomplices. A philosopher of olden times would have said many fine things upon the contrast of the elegance and misery which here elbow one another.

It is twelve o'clock, the promenade is now deserted, and I return on board the *Bel-Ami*, where awaits me an unpretending breakfast prepared by Raymond, whom I find dressed up in a white apron, frying potatoes.

All the remainder of the day, I read.

The wind was still violently blowing, and the yacht danced between her anchors, for we had been obliged to let go the starboard one also. The motion ended by benumbing me, and I fell into a long doze. When Bernard came into the cabin to light the candles it was seven o'clock, and as the surf along the quay made landing difficult, I dined on my boat.

After dinner I went up and sat in the open air. Around me Cannes stretched forth her many lights. Nothing can be prettier than a town lighted up and seen from the sea. On the left, the old quarter with its houses that seemed to climb one upon the other mingled its lights with that of the stars; on the right, the gas lamps of the Croisette extended like an enormous serpent a mile and a half long.

And then I reflected that in all the villas, in all

the hotels, people were gathered together this evening, as they were last night, as they will be tomorrow, and that they are talking. Talking! about what? the princes! the weather! And then?—the weather!—the princes!—and then—about nothing!

Can anything be more dreary than *table d'hôte* conversation? I have lived in hotels, I have endured the emptiness of the human soul as it is there laid bare. In truth, one must be hedged in by the most determined indifference, not to weep with grief, disgust, and shame, when one hears men talk. Man, the ordinary man, rich, known, esteemed, respected, held in consideration, is satisfied with himself, and he knows nothing, he understands nothing, yet he talks of intelligence as though he knew all about it.

How blinded and intoxicated we must be by our foolish pride, to fancy ourselves anything more than animals slightly superior to other animals. Listen to them, the fools, seated round the table! They are talking! Talking with gentle, confiding ingenuousness, and they imagine that they are exchanging ideas! What ideas? They say where they have been walking: "It was a very pretty walk, but rather cold coming home;" "The cooking is not bad in the hotel, although hotel food is always rather spicy." And they relate what they have done, what they like, what they believe.

I fancy I behold the deformity of their souls as a monstrous fœtus in a jar of spirits of wine. I assist at the slow birth of the commonplace sayings they constantly repeat; I watch the words as they drop from the granary of stupidity into their imbecile mouths, and from their mouths into the inert atmosphere which bears them to my ears.

But their ideas, their noblest, most solemn, most respected ideas, are they not the unimpeachable proof of the omnipotence of stupidity—eternal, universal, indestructible stupidity?

All their conceptions of God, an awkward deity, whose first creations are such failures that he must needs re-create them, a deity who listens to our secrets and notes them down, a God who, in turn policeman, Jesuit, lawyer, gardener, is conceived now in cuirass, now in robes, now in wooden shoes; then the negations of God based upon pure terrestrial logic, the arguments for and against, the history of religious beliefs, of schisms, heresies, philosophies, the affirmations as well as the doubts, the puerility of principles, the ferocious and bloody violence of the originators of hypotheses, the utter chaos of contestation, in short, every miserable effort of this wretchedly impotent being, man, impotent in conception, in imagination, in knowledge, all prove that he was thrown upon this absurdly small world for the sole purpose of eating, drinking, manufacturing children and little songs, and killing his neighbor by way of pastime.

Happy are those whom life satisfies, who are amused and content.

There are some such who, easily pleased, are delighted with everything. They love the sun and the rain, the snow and the fog; they love festivities as well as the calm of their own homes; they love all they see, all they do, all they say, all they hear.

They lead either an easy life, quiet and satisfied amid their offspring, or an agitated existence full of pleasures and amusement.

In neither case are they dull.

Life, for them, is an amusing kind of play, in

which they are themselves actors; an excellent and varied show, which though offering nothing unexpected, thoroughly delights them.

Other men, however, who run through at a glance the narrow circle of human satisfactions, remain dismayed before the emptiness of happiness, the monotony and poverty of earthly joys!

As soon as they have reached thirty years of age all is ended for them. What have they to expect? Nothing now can interest them; they have made the circuit of our meager pleasures.

Happy are those who know not the loathsome acts constantly repeated; happy are those who have the strength to recommence each day the same task, with the same gestures, amid the same furniture, in front of the same horizon. Under the same horizon, under the same sky, to go out in the same streets, where they meet the same faces and the same animals. Happy are those who do not perceive with unutterable disgust that nothing changes, and that all is weariness.

We must indeed be a slow and narrow-minded race to be so easily pleased and satisfied with what is. How is it that the worldly audience has not yet called out, "Curtain," has not yet demanded the next act, with other beings than mankind, other manners, other pleasures, other plants, other planets, other inventions, other adventures?

Is it possible no one has yet felt a loathing for the sameness of the human face, of the animals which by their unvarying instincts, transmitted in their seed from the first to the last of their race, seem to be but living machinery; a hatred of landscapes eternally the same, and of pleasures never varied?



Console yourself, it is said, by the love of science and art.

But is it not evident that we are always shut up in ourselves, without ever being able to quit ourselves, for ever condemned to drag the chains of our wingless dream?

All the progress obtained by our cerebral effort consists in the ascertainment of material facts by means of instruments ridiculously imperfect, which, however, make up in a certain degree for the inefficiency of our organs. Every twenty years, some unhappy inquirer, who generally dies in the attempt, discovers that the atmosphere contains a gas hitherto unknown; that an imponderable, inexplicable, unqualifiable force can be obtained by rubbing a piece of wax on cloth; that among the innumerable unknown stars there is one that has not yet been noticed in the immediate vicinity of another, which had not only been observed, but even designated by name for many years. What matter?

Our diseases are due to microbes? Very well. But where do those microbes come from? and the diseases of these invisible ones? And the suns, whence do they come?

We know nothing, we understand nothing, we can do nothing, we foresee nothing, we imagine nothing, we are shut up, imprisoned in ourselves. And there are people who marvel at the genius of humanity!

Art? Painting consists in reproducing with coloring matter monotonous landscapes, which seldom resemble nature; in delineating men, and striving, without ever succeeding, to give the aspect of living beings. Obstinate and uselessly one struggles to imitate what is; and the result is a motionless and



dumb copy of the actions of life, which is barely comprehensible even to the educated eye that one has sought to attract.

Wherefore such efforts? Wherefore such a vain imitation? Wherefore this trivial reproduction of things in themselves so dull? How petty!

Poets do with words what painters try to do with colors. Again, wherefore?

When one has read four of the most talented, of the most ingenious authors, it is idle to open another. And nothing more can be learned. They also, these men, can but imitate men. They exhaust themselves in sterile labor. For mankind changing not, their useless art is immutable. Ever since our poor minds have awakened man is the same; his sentiments, his beliefs, his sensations are the same. He has neither advanced nor retrograded; he has never moved. Of what use is it to me to learn what I am, to read what I think, to see myself portrayed in the trivial adventures of a novel?

Ah! if poets could vanquish space, explore the planets, discover other worlds, other beings; vary unceasingly for my mind the nature and form of things, convey me constantly through a changeful and surprising Unknown, open for me mysterious gates in unexpected and marvelous horizons, I would read them night and day. But they can, impotent as they are, but change the place of a word, and show me my own image, as the painters do. Of what use is all this?

For man's thought is motionless.

And the precise limits, so high, so insurmountable, once attained, it turns like a horse in a circus, like a fly shut up in a bottle, fluttering against the sides and uselessly dashing itself against them.

And yet, for want of any better occupation, thought is always a solace, when one lives alone.

On this little boat, rocked by the sea, that a wave could fill and upset, I know, I feel, how true it is that nothing we know exists, for the earth which floats in empty space is even more isolated, more lost than this skiff on the billows. Their importance is the same; their destiny will be accomplished. And I rejoice at understanding the nothingness of the belief and the vanity of the hopes which our insect-like pride has begotten.

I went to bed, cradled by the pitching of the boat, and slept with the deep slumber that one sleeps at sea, till the moment when Bernard awoke me to say:

"Bad weather, sir; we cannot sail this morning." The wind had fallen, but the sea, very rough in the open, would not allow of our making sail for Saint-Raphaël.

Another day that must be spent at Cannes!

At about twelve o'clock a westerly wind again got up, less strong than the day before, and I resolved to take advantage of it and visit the squadron in Gulf Juan.

In crossing the roads, the *Bel-Ami* jumped about like a goat, and I had to steer very carefully in order to avoid, with each wave which took us broadsides, having a mass of water dashed in my face. Soon, however, I was sheltered by the islands and entered the channel under the fortress of Sainte-Marguerite.

Its straight wall stretches down to the rocks, washed by the waves, and its summit hardly overtops the slightly elevated coast of the island. It is somewhat like a head crammed down between two high shoulders.

The spot where Bazaine descended can be easily made out.

It was not necessary to be much of a gymnast to slide down those accommodating rocks.

The escape was related to me with every detail, by a man who pretended to be, and probably was, thoroughly well informed.

Bazaine was allowed a good deal of liberty, his wife and children being permitted to come and see him every day. Madame Bazaine, who was an energetic woman, declared to her husband that she would leave him for ever, and carry off the children, if he would not make his escape, and she explained her plan. He hesitated at first, on account of the danger of the flight and the doubtfulness of success, but when he saw that his wife was determined to carry out her plan, he consented.

Thereupon, every day some toys for the little ones were brought into the fortress, among others an entire set of appliances for drawing-room gymnastics. Out of these toys was made the knotted rope that the Marshal was to make use of. It was very slowly made, in order to give rise to no suspicion, and when finished was hidden away by a friendly hand in a corner of the prison yard.

The date of the flight was then decided upon. They chose a Sunday, the supervision appearing to be less rigorous on that day.

Madame Bazaine then absented herself for a few days.

The Marshal usually walked about in the yard till eight o'clock in the evening, in company with the governor of the prison, a pleasant man whose agreeable conversation was a resource to Bazaine. Then he would go back to his rooms, which the chief

jailer locked and bolted in the presence of his superior officer.

On the evening of the escape, Bazaine pretended he was indisposed, and expressed a wish to retire an hour earlier than usual. He returned therefore to his apartment, but as soon as the governor had gone off to call the jailer and tell him to lock up the captive, the Marshal came out again quickly and hid himself in the yard.

The empty prison was locked up, and each man went home.

At about eleven o'clock Bazaine, armed with the ladder, left his hiding-place, fastened the ropes, and made his descent on to the rocks.

At dawn of day, an accomplice unfastened the ladder and threw it over the walls.

Toward eight o'clock in the morning, the governor, surprised at not seeing anything of his prisoner, who was wont to be an early riser, sent to inquire about him. The Marshal's valet refused, however, to disturb his master.

At length, at nine o'clock, the governor forced open the door and found the cage empty.

On her side Madame Bazaine, in order to carry out her scheme, had applied to a man who was indebted to her husband for a most important service. She appealed to a grateful heart, and gained an ally both energetic and devoted. Together they settled all the details; she went under an assumed name to Genoa, and under pretext of an excursion to Naples hired for a thousand francs (forty pounds sterling) a day a little Italian steamer, stipulating that the trip should last at least a week, and that it might be extended to another week on the same terms.

The vessel started, but no sooner were they at sea than the traveler appeared to change her mind, and asked the captain if he would object to going as far as Cannes to fetch her sister-in-law. The sailor willingly consented, and he dropped anchor on Sunday evening in the Gulf Juan.

Madame Bazaine was set on shore and ordered the boat to keep within hail. Her devoted accomplice was awaiting her in another boat near the promenade of the Croisette, and they crossed the channel which separates the mainland from the little island of Sainte-Marguerite. There her husband was waiting on the rocks, his clothes torn, face bruised, and hands bleeding. The sea being rather rough, he was obliged to wade through the water to reach the boat, which otherwise would have been dashed to pieces against the coast.

When they returned to the mainland, they cast the boat adrift.

They rejoined the first boat, and then at last the vessel, which had remained with steam up. Madame Bazaine informed the captain that her sister-in-law was not well enough to join her, and pointing to the Marshal, she added:

"Not having a servant, I have hired a valet. The fool has just tumbled down on the rocks and got himself in the mess you see. Send him, if you please, down to the sailors, and give him what is necessary to dress his wounds and mend his clothes."

Bazaine went down and spent the night in the fore-castle.

The next morning at break of day, they were out at sea; then Madame Bazaine again changed her mind, and pleading indisposition, had herself reconducted to Genoa.

However, the news of the escape had already spread, and the populace hearing of it, a clamoring mob assembled under the hotel windows. The uproar soon became so violent that the terrified landlord insisted on the travelers escaping by a private door.

I relate this story as it was told to me, but I guarantee nothing.

We drew near the squadron, the heavy ironclads standing out in single file, like battle-towers built in the sea. They were the *Colbert*, the *Dévastation*, the *Amiral-Duperré*, the *Curbet*, the *Indomptable*, and the *Richelieu*; two despatch-boats, the *Hiron-delle* and the *Milan*; and four torpedo-boats going through evolutions in the gulf.

I wanted to visit the *Courbet*, as it passes for the most perfect type in the French navy.

Nothing can give a better idea of human labor, of the intricate and formidable labor done by the ingeniously clever hands of the puny human animal, than the enormous iron citadels which float and sail about bearing an army of soldiers, an arsenal of monstrous arms, the enormous masses of which are made of tiny pieces fitted, soldered, forged, bolted together, a toil of ants and giants, which shows at the same time all the genius, all the weakness, and all the irretrievable barbarousness of the race, so active and so feeble, directing all its efforts toward creating instruments for its own self-destruction.

Those who in former days raised up cathedrals in stone, carved as finely as any lacework, fairy-like palaces to shelter childish and pious fancies, were they worth less than those who nowadays launch forth on the sea these iron houses, real temples of Death?



At the same moment that I leave the ship to get on board my cockleshell, I hear the sound of firing on shore. It is the regiment at Antibes practising rifle shooting on the sands and among the pine woods. The smoke rises in white flakes, like evaporating clouds of cotton, and I can see the red trousers of the soldiers as they run along the beach.

The naval officers suddenly become interested, point their glasses landward, and their hearts beat faster at this spectacle of mimic warfare.

At the mere mention of the word war, I am seized with a sense of bewilderment, as though I heard of witchcraft, of the inquisition, of some far distant thing, ended long ago, abominable and monstrous, against all natural law.

When we talk of cannibals, we proudly smile and proclaim our superiority over these savages. Which are the savages, the true savages? Those who fight to eat the vanquished, or those who fight to kill, only to kill?

The gallant little soldiers running about over there are as surely doomed to death as the flocks of sheep driven along the road by the butcher. They will fall on some plain, with their heads split open by saber-cuts, or their chests riddled by bullets, and yet they are young men who might work, produce something, be useful. Their fathers are old and poverty-stricken, their mothers, who during twenty years have loved them, adored them as only mothers can adore, may perchance hear in six months or a year that the son, the child, the big fellow, reared with so much care, at such an expense and with so much love, has been cast in a hole like a dead dog, after having been ripped open by a bullet and tram-



pled, crushed, mangled by the rush of cavalry charges. Why have they killed her boy, her beautiful boy, her sole hope, her pride, her life? She cannot understand. Yes, indeed, why?

War! fighting! slaughtering! butchering men! And to think that now, in our own century, with all our civilization, with the expansion of science and the height of philosophy to which the human race is supposed to have attained, we should have schools in which we teach the art of killing, of killing from afar, to perfection, numbers of people at the same time; poor devils, innocent men, fathers of families, men of untarnished reputation. The most astounding thing is that the people do not rise up against the governing power. What difference is there then between monarchies and republics? And what is more astounding still, why does society not rise up bodily in rebellion at the word "war"?

Ah, yes, we shall ever continue to live borne down by the old and odious customs, the criminal prejudices, the ferocious ideas of our barbarous forefathers, for we are but animals, and we shall remain animals, led only by instinct, that nothing will ever change.

Should we not have spurned any other than Victor Hugo, who should have launched forth the grand cry of deliverance and truth?

"To-day might is called violence, and is beginning to be condemned; war is arraigned. Civilization, at the demand of all humanity, directs an inquiry and indicts the great criminal brief against conquerors and generals. The nations are beginning to understand that the aggrandizement of a crime can in no way lessen it; that if murder is a crime, to murder a great many does not create any atten-

uating circumstance; that if robbery is a disgrace, invasion cannot be a glory.

“ Ah! Let us proclaim the peremptory truth, let us dishonor war.”

Idle anger, poetic indignation! War is more venerated than ever.

A clever artist in such matters, a slaughtering genius, Monsieur de Moltke, replied one day to some peace delegates, in the following extraordinary words:

“ War is holy and of divine institution; it is one of the sacred laws of nature; it keeps alive in men all the great and noble sentiments, honor, disinterestedness, virtue, courage, in one word it prevents them from falling into the most hideous materialism.”

Therefore to collect a herd of some four hundred thousand men, march day and night without respite, to think of nothing, study nothing, learn nothing, read nothing, be of no earthly use to any one, rot with dirt, lie down in mire, live like brutes in a continual besotment, pillage towns, burn villages, ruin nations; then, meeting another similar agglomeration of human flesh, rush upon it, shed lakes of blood, cover plains with pounded flesh mingled with muddy and bloody earth; pile up heaps of slain; have arms and legs blown off, brains scattered without benefit to any one, and perish at the corner of some field while your old parents, your wife and children are dying of hunger; this is what is called not falling into the most hideous materialism!

Warriors are the scourges of the earth. We struggle against nature and ignorance; against obstacles of all kinds, in order to lessen the hardships

of our miserable existence. Men, benefactors, scholars wear out their lives toiling, seeking what may help, what may solace their brethren. Eager in their useful work, they pile up discovery on discovery, enlarging the human mind, extending science, adding something each day to the stock of human knowledge, to the welfare, the comfort, the strength of their country.

War is declared. In six months the generals have destroyed the efforts of twenty years' patience and genius. And this is what is called not falling into the most hideous materialism.

We have seen war. We have seen men maddened and gone back to their brute estate, killing for mere pleasure, killing out of terror, out of bravado, from sheer ostentation. Then when right no longer exists, when law is dead, when all notion of justice has disappeared, we have seen ruthlessly shot down innocent beings who, picked up along the road, had become objects of suspicion simply because they were afraid. We have seen dogs as they lay chained up at their master's gate killed in order to try a new revolver; we have seen cows riddled with bullets as they lay in the fields, without reason, only to fire off guns, just for fun.

And this is what is called not falling into the most hideous materialism. To invade a country, to kill the man who defends his home, on the plea that he wears a smock and has no forage cap on his head, to burn down the houses of the poor creatures who are without bread, to break, to steal furniture, drink the wine found in the cellars, violate the women found in the streets, consume thousands of francs' worth of powder, and leave behind misery and cholera.

This is what is called not falling into the most hideous materialism.

What have they ever done to show their intelligence, these valiant warriors? Nothing. What have they invented? Guns and cannons. That is all.

The inventor of the wheelbarrow, has he not done more for humanity by the simple and practical idea of fitting a wheel between two poles than the inventor of modern fortifications?

What remains of Greece? Books and marbles. Is she great by what she conquered, or by what she produced? Was it the invasion of the Persians that prevented her from falling into the most hideous materialism? Was it the invasion of the barbarians that saved Rome and regenerated her?

Did Napoleon the First continue the great intellectual movement begun by the philosophers at the end of the last century?

Well, yes, since governments assume the right of death over the people, there is nothing astonishing in the people sometimes assuming the right of death over governments.

They defend themselves. They are right. No one has an absolute right to govern others. It can only be done for the good of those who are governed. Whosoever governs must consider it as much his duty to avoid war as it is that of the captain of a vessel to avoid shipwreck.

When a captain has lost his ship, he is judged and condemned if found guilty of negligence or even of incapacity.

Why should not governments be judged after the declaration of every war? If the people understood this, if they took the law into their own hands

against the murdering powers, if they refused to allow themselves to be killed without a reason, if they used their weapons against those who distributed them to slaughter with, that day war would indeed be a dead letter. But that day will never dawn!



## CHAPTER III

### MOONLIGHT AND MADNESS

AGAY, *April 8th.*



FINE weather, sir."

I get up and go on deck. It is three o'clock in the morning; the sea is calm, the infinite heavens look like an immense shady vault sown with grains of fire. A very light breeze comes from off the land.

The coffee is hot. We swallow it down, and, without losing a moment, in order to take advantage of the favorable wind, we set sail.

Once more we glide over the waters toward the open sea. The coast disappears, all around us looks black. It is indeed a sensation, an enervating and delicious emotion to plunge onward into the empty night, into the deep silence on the sea, far from everything. It seems as though one was quitting the world, as though one would never reach any land, as though there were no more shores and even no more days. At my feet, a little lantern throws a light upon the compass that guides me on my way. We



must run at least three miles in the open to round Cape Roux and the Drammont in safety, whatever may be the wind when the sun has risen. To avoid any accidents, I have had the side-lights lit, red on the port and green on the starboard side. And I enjoy with rapture this silent, uninterrupted, quiet flight.

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Suddenly a cry is heard in front of us. I am startled, for the voice is near; and I can perceive nothing, nothing but the obscure wall of darkness into which I am plunging, and which closes again behind me. Raymond, who watches forward, says to me: "'Tis a tartan going east. Put the helm up, sir, we shall pass astern." And of a sudden, nigh at hand, uprises a vague but startling phantom; the large drifting shadow of a big sail, seen but for a few seconds and quickly vanishing. Nothing is more strange, more fantastic, and more thrilling, than these rapid apparitions at sea during the night. The fishing and sand-boats carry no lights; they are, therefore, only seen as they pass by, and they impart a tightening of the heartstrings, as of some supernatural encounter.

I hear in the distance the whistling of a bird. It approaches, passes by, and goes off. Oh, that I could wander like it!

At last dawn breaks, slowly, gently, without a cloud, and the day begins, a real summer's day.

Raymond asserts that we shall have an east wind, Bernard still believes in a westerly one, and advises my changing our course, and sailing on the starboard tack straight toward the Drammont, which stands out in the distance. I am at once of his opinion, and under the gentle breath of a dying breeze, we draw nearer to the Esterel. The long red shore drops into

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the blue water, giving it a violet tinge. It is strange, pretty, bristling with numberless points and gulfs, capricious and coquettish rocks, the thousand whims of a much admired mountain. On its slopes, the pine forests reach up to the granite summits, which resemble castles, towns, and armies of stones running after each other. And at its foot the sea is so clear that the sandy shoals or the weedy bottoms can be distinguished.

Ay, verily, I do feel on certain days such a horror of all that is that I long for death. The invariable monotony of landscapes, faces, and thoughts becomes an intensely acute suffering. The meanness of the universe astonishes and revolts me, the littleness of all things fills me with disgust, and I am overwhelmed by the platitude of human beings.

At other times, on the contrary, I enjoy everything as an animal does. If my spirit, restless, agitated, hypertrophied by work, bounds onward to hopes that are not those of our race, and then, after having realized that all is vanity, falls back into a contempt for all that is, my animal body, at least, is enraptured with all the intoxication of life. Like the birds, I love the sky; like the prowling wolf, the forests; I delight in rocky heights, like a chamois; the thick grass I love to roll in and gallop over like a horse, and, like a fish, I revel in the clear waters. I feel thrilling within me the sensations of all the different species of animals, of all their instincts, of all the confused longings of inferior creatures. I love the earth as they do, not as other men do; I love it without admiring it, without poetry, without exultation; I love with a deep and animal attachment, contemptible yet holy, all that lives, all that grows, all we see; for all this, leaving my spirit calm, ex-

cites only my eyes and my heart; the days, the nights, the rivers, the seas, the storms, the woods, the hues of dawn, the glance of woman, her very touch.

The gentle ripple of water on the sandy shore, or in the rocky granite, affects and moves me, and the joy that fills me as I feel myself driven forward by the wind, and carried along by the waves, proceeds from the abandonment of myself to the brutal and natural forces of creation, from my return to a primitive state.

When the weather is beautiful, as it is to-day, I feel in my veins the blood of the lascivious and vagabond fauns of olden times. I am no longer the brother of mankind, but the brother of all creatures and all nature!

The sun mounts above the horizon. The breeze dies away as it did the day before yesterday; but the west wind foretold by Bernard does not rise any more than the easterly one announced by Raymond.

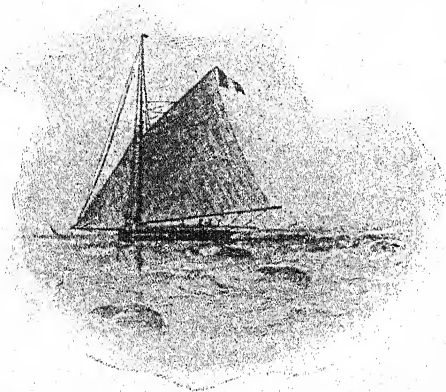
Till ten o'clock we float motionless like a wreck, then a little breath from the open sea starts us on our road, falls, rises again, seems to mock us, glancing across the sail, promising at each moment a breeze that does not come. It is nothing, a mere whiff, a flutter of a fan; nevertheless it is sufficient to prevent our being stationary. The porpoises, those clowns of the sea, play about around us, dashing out of the water with rapid bounds, as though they would take flight, striking into the air like lightning, then plunging and rising again farther off.

At about one o'clock, as we lay broadside on to Agay, the breeze completely gave way, and I realized that I should sleep out at sea if I did not man

the boat to tow the yacht and take shelter in the bay.

I therefore made the two men get into the dingy, and when at a distance of some thirty yards or so they began to tug me along. A fierce sun was glaring on the water, and its burning rays beat down upon the decks.

The two sailors rowed in slow and regular fashion like worn-out cranks, which, though working



with difficulty, ceaselessly continue their mechanical labor.

The Bay of Agay forms a very pretty dock, well sheltered and closed on one side by upright, red rocks, overlooked by the semaphore on the summit of the mountain, and prolonged toward the open sea by the Ile d'Or, so called on account of its color; while on the other side is a line of sunken rocks and a small headland level with the surface of the water, bearing a lighthouse to mark the entry.

At the farther end is an inn, ready for the entertainment of skippers of vessels that have taken ref-

uge there from stress of weather, or for fishermen during the summer; and a railway station where trains only stop twice a day, and where no one ever gets out; and a pretty river that winds away into the Esterel, as far as the valley named Malin-fermet, which is as full of pink oleanders as any African ravine.

No road leads from the interior to the delicious bay. A pathway only takes you to Saint-Raphaël, passing through the porphyry quarries of Dramont; but no vehicle could use it. We are therefore quite lost in the mountain.

I resolved to wander about till nightfall in the paths bordered by cistus and lentisk. The scent of wild plants, strong and perfumed, filled the air, mingling with the powerful resinous breath of the forest, which seemed to pant in the heat.

After an hour's walk, I was deep among the pine trees, scattered sparsely on a gentle declivity of the mountain. The purple granite—the bones of the earth—seemed reddened by the sun, and I wended my way slowly, happy as the lizards must be on burning hot stones, when I perceived on the summit of the mountain, coming toward me, without seeing me, two lovers lost in the depths of their love dream.

'Twas a charmingly pretty sight; on they came, with arms entwined, moving with absent footsteps through the alternating sun and shade that flecked the sloping banks.

She appeared to me very graceful and very simple, with a gray traveling dress and a bold, coquetish felt hat. I hardly saw him, I only noticed that he seemed well bred. I had seated myself behind the trunk of a pine tree, to watch them pass by.

They did not perceive me, and continued their descent with interlocked arms, silently and without a word, so much did their love absorb them.

When I lost sight of them I felt as though a sadness had fallen on my heart. A felicity that I knew not had passed near me, and I guessed that it was the best of all. And I returned toward the Bay of Agay, too dejected now to continue my stroll.

Until the evening I lay stretched out on the grass by the side of the river, and at about seven o'clock I went into the inn for dinner.

My men had warned the innkeeper, and he was expecting me. My table was set in the white-washed room by the side of another, at which were already settled my love-stricken couple, face to face, with eyes fondly gazing upon each other.

I felt ashamed at disturbing them, as though I were committing a mean and unbecoming action.

They stared at me for a few seconds, and then resumed their low-toned conversation.

The innkeeper, who had known me for a long time, took a seat near mine. He talked of wild boars and rabbits, the fine weather, the *mistral*, about an Italian captain who had slept at the inn a few nights before, and then, to flatter my vanity, he praised my yacht, the black hull of which I could see through the window, with its tall mast, and my red and white pennant floating aloft.

My neighbors, who had eaten very rapidly, soon left. As for me, I dawdled about looking at the slight crescent of the moon, shedding its soft rays over the little roadstead. At last I saw my dingy nearing the shore, scattering lines of silver as it advanced through the pale, motionless light that fell upon the water.

When I went down to my boat, I saw the lovers standing on the beach gazing at the sea.

And as I went off to the quick sound of the oars, I still distinguished their outlines on the shore, their shadows erect side by side. They seemed to fill the bay, the night, the heavens, with a symbolic grandeur, so penetrating was the atmosphere of love they diffused around them, so widespread over the far horizon.

And when I had reached my yacht, I remained seated a long while on deck, overcome with sadness without knowing wherefore, filled with regrets without knowing why, unwilling even to decide on going down to my cabin, as though I would fain absorb a little more of the tenderness they had diffused around them. Suddenly one of the windows of the inn was lit up, and I saw their profiles on the bright background. Then my loneliness overpowered me, and in the balminess of the springlike night, at the soft sound of the waves on the sand, under the delicate crescent shedding its rays over the sea, I felt in my heart such an intense desire of love that I was near crying out in my envious distress.

Then, all at once, I became ashamed of this weakness, and, unwilling to admit to myself that I was a man like another, I accused the moonshine of disturbing my reason.

I have moreover always believed that the moon exercises a mysterious influence on the human brain.

It fills poets with vagaries, rendering them delightful or ridiculous, and produces on lovers' affections the effect of Ruhmkorff's pile on electric currents. The man who loves in a normal manner under the sunlight adores with frenzy under the moon.



A youthful and charming woman maintained to me one day, I forget on what occasion, that moon-strokes are infinitely more dangerous than sun-strokes. They are caught, she said, unawares, out walking perchance on a beautiful night, and they are incurable; you remain mad; not raving mad, not mad enough to be shut up, but mad of a special madness, gentle, incurable; and you no longer think on any subject like other men.

I have certainly been moonstruck to-night, for I feel strangely unreasonable and light-headed; and the little crescent in its downward course toward the sea affects me, melts me to tears, and rends my heart.

Wherein lies the power of seduction of this moon, aged dead planet that it is, rambling through the heavens with its yellow face and sad ghostly light, that it should thus agitate us, we whom even our vagabond thoughts disturb?

Do we love it because it is dead? as the poet Haraucourt says:

“Puis ce fut l'âge blond des tiédurs et des vents.

La lune se peupla de murmures vivants:

Elle eut des mers sans fond et des fleuves sans nombre,

Des troupeaux, des cités, des pleurs, des cris joyeux;

Elle eut l'amour; elle eut ses arts, ses lois, ses dieux,

Et lentement rentra dans l'ombre.”\*

Do we love it because the poets, to whom we owe the eternal illusion that surrounds us in this world,

---

\* Then it was the fair age of balminess and breezes.

The moon became peopled with living whispers;

She had bottomless seas and numberless rivers,

Flocks, cities, tears, and cries full of joy;

She had love; she had her arts, her laws, her gods,

Then slowly sank back into darkness.



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have dimmed our sight by all the images they have seen in its pallid rays, have taught our over-excited sensibility to feel in a thousand different ways the soft and monotonous effects it sheds over the world?

When it rises behind the trees, when it pours forth its shimmering light on the flowing river, when it descends through the boughs on to the sand of the shaded alleys, when it mounts solitary in the black and empty sky, when it dips toward the sea, stretching out on the undulating surface of the waters a vast pathway of light, are we not haunted by all the charming verses with which it has inspired great dreamers?

If we wander forth by night in joyous spirits, and if we see its smooth circle, round like a yellow eye watching us, perched just over a roof, Musset's immortal ballad is recalled to our mind.

And is it not he, the mocking poet, who immediately presents it to us through his eyes?

"C'était dans la nuit, brune,  
Sur le clocher jauni  
La lune  
Comme un point sur un I.

"Lune, quel esprit sombre  
Promène au bout d'un fil,  
Dans l'ombre,  
Ta face ou ton profil?" \*

---

\* 'Twas in the dusky night,  
Above the yellowed steeple,  
Stood the moon  
Like a dot on an I.

By what sombre spirit  
Is thy face or profile  
Swung as from a thread  
Through the shadows of the sky?

If we walk on some evening full of sadness, on the beach by the side of the ocean illuminated by its rays, do we not, in spite of ourselves, at once recite the two grand and melancholy lines:

“Seule au-dessus des mers, la lune voyageant  
Laisse dans les flots noirs tomber ses pleurs d'argent.” \*

If we awake, to find our bed lighted up by a long beam coming in at the window, do we not feel at once as though the white figure evoked by Catulle Mendès were descending upon us:

“Elle venait, avec un lis dans chaque main,  
La pente d'un rayon lui servant de chemin.” †

If, in some evening walk in the country, we suddenly hear the long sinister howl of a farm dog, are we not forcibly struck by the recollection of the admirable poem of Leconte de Lisle, *Les Hurleurs*?

“Seule, la lune pâle, en écartant la nue,  
Comme une morne lampe, oscillait tristement.  
Monde muet, marqué d'un signe de colère,  
Débris d'un globe mort au hasard dispersé,  
Elle laissait tomber de son orbe glacé  
Un reflet sépulchral sur l'océan polaire.” ‡

\* Alone above the seas, the wandering moon  
Lets fall her silver tears in the black billows.

† With a lily in each hand she came,  
The slanting beam her pathway.

‡ Alone the pale moon, parting the clouds  
Like a gloomy lamp, sadly oscillates.  
Dumb world, marked by a sign of anger,  
Fragment of a dead globe dispersed at haphazard,  
She let fall from her frozen orb  
A sepulchral reflection on a polar ocean.

At the evening trysting-place, one saunters slowly through the leafy path, with arm encircling the beloved one, pressing her hand, and kissing her brow. She is perhaps a little tired, a little moved, and walks with lagging step.

A bench appears in sight, under the leaves bathed by the soft light, as by a calm shower.

In our hearts and minds, like an exquisite love-song, the two charming lines start up:

“Et réveiller, pour s’asseoir à sa place,  
Le clair de lune endormi sur le banc!” \*

Can one see the lessening crescent, as on this evening, cast its fair profile on the vast sky span-gled with stars, without thinking of the end of that masterpiece of Victor Hugo’s, which is called *Boaz Endormis*

“Et Ruth se demandait,  
Immobile, ouvrant l’œil à demi sous ses voiles,  
Quel Dieu, quel moissonneur de l’éternel été,  
Avait, en s’en allant, négligemment jeté  
Cette faucille d’or dans le champ des étoiles.” †

And who has better described the bright moon, courteous and tender to all lovers, than Hugo:

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\* And, to take her place, one awakens  
A ray of moonlight asleep on the bench.

† And Ruth, motionless,  
Asked herself, as she opened her half-closed eye under her  
veil,  
What God, what reaper of the eternal summer,  
Had negligently thrown as he passed by  
This golden sickle in the starry field.

“ La nuit vint, tout se tut ; les flambeaux s'éteignirent ;  
 Dans les bois assombris, les sources se plaignirent.  
 Le rossignol, caché dans son nid ténébreux,  
 Chanta comme un poète et comme un amoureux.  
 Chacun se dispersa sous les profonds feuillages,  
 Les folles, en riant, entraînent les sages ;  
 L'amante s'en alla dans l'ombre avec l'amant ;  
 Et troublés comme on l'est en songe, vaguement,  
 Ils sentaient par degrés se mêler à leur âme,  
 A leurs discours secrets, à leur regards de flamme,  
 A leurs cœurs, à leurs sens, à leur molle raison,  
 Le clair de lune bleu qui baignait l'horizon.”\*

And I remember also the admirable prayer to the moon which is the opening scene of the eleventh book of Apuleius' *Golden Ass*.

Still, all the songs of mankind are not enough to account for the sentimental sadness with which this poor planet inspires us.

We pity the moon, in spite of ourselves, without knowing the reason, and for this it is we love it.

Even the tender feeling we bestow on it is mingled with compassion ; we pity it like an old maid, for we vaguely feel, the poets notwithstanding, that it is not a corpse but a cold virgin.

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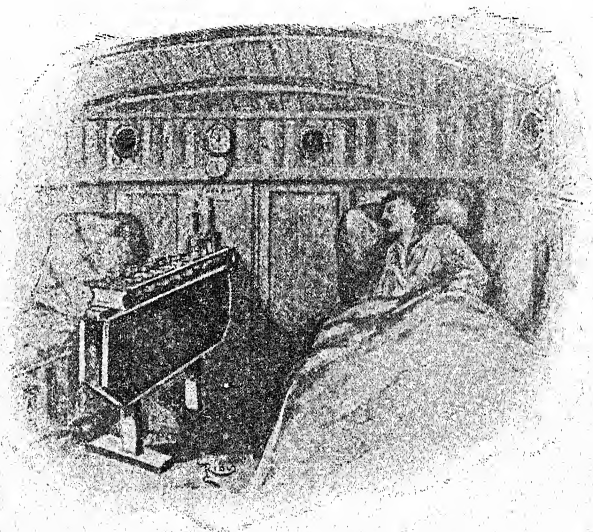
\* Night fell, all was hushed ; the torches died out  
 Under the darkening woods, the springs lamented.  
 The nightingale, hidden in its shady nest,  
 Sang like a poet and like a lover.  
 In the depths of the dark foliage all dispersed,  
 The madcaps laughing carried off the wise,  
 The fair one disappeared in the gloom with her lover,  
 And with the vague trouble of some dream  
 They felt by degrees intermingled with their souls,  
 With their secret thoughts, with their glances of flame,  
 With their hearts, their senses, with their yielding reason,  
 The blue moonlight that bathed the vast horizon.



Planets, like woman, need a husband, and the poor moon, disdained by the sun, is nothing more nor less than an old maid, as we mortals say.

And it is for this reason that, with its timid light, it fills us with hopes that cannot be realized, and desires that cannot be fulfilled.

All that we vainly and dimly wait and hope for upon this earth works in our hearts like mysterious



but powerless sap, beneath the pale rays of the moon. When we raise our eyes to it, we quiver with inexpressible tenderness and are thrilled by impossible dreams!

The narrow crescent, a mere thread of gold, now dipped its keen, gleaming point in the water, and gradually plunged gently and slowly till the other point, so delicate that I could not detect the moment of its vanishing, had also disappeared.

Then I raised my eyes toward the inn. The lighted window was closed. A dull melancholy crushed my heart, and I went below.

No sooner had I lain down than I felt sleep was impossible, and I remained lying on my back with my eyes closed, my thoughts on the alert, and all my nerves quivering. Not a motion, not a sound, near or far, nothing but the breathing of the two sailors through the thin bulkhead, could be heard.

Suddenly something grated. What was it? I know not. Some block in the rigging, no doubt; but the tone—tender, plaintive, and mournful—of the sound sent a thrill through me; then nothing more. An infinite silence seemed to spread from the earth to the stars; nothing more—not a breath, not a shiver on the waters, not a vibration of the yacht, nothing; and then again the slight and unrecognizable moan recommenced. It seemed to me as I listened as though a jagged blade were sawing at my heart, just as certain noises, certain notes, certain voices harrow us, and in one second pour into our soul all it can contain of sorrow, desperation, and anguish. I listened expectantly, and heard it again, the identical sound, which now seemed to emanate from my own self—to be wrung out of my nerves—or, rather, to resound in a secret, deep, and desolate cry. Yes, it was a cruel though familiar voice, a voice expected, and full of desperation. It passed over me with its weird and feeble tones as an uncanny thing, sowing broadcast the appalling terrors of delirium, for it had power to awake the horrible distress which lies slumbering in the inmost heart of every living man. What was it? It was the voice ringing with reproaches which torture our soul, clamoring ceaselessly, obscure, painful, harassing; a

voice, unappeasable and mysterious, which will not be ignored; ferocious in its reproaches for what we have done, as well as what we have left undone; the voice of remorse and useless regrets for the days gone by, and the women unloved; for the joys that were vain, and the hopes that are dead; the voice of the past, of all that has disappointed us, has fled and disappeared for ever, of what we have not, nor shall ever attain; the small shrill voice which ever proclaims the failure of our life, the uselessness of our efforts, the impotence of our minds, and the weakness of our flesh.

It spoke to me in that short whisper, recommending after each dismal silence of the dark night; it spoke of all I would have loved, of all that I had vaguely desired, expected, dreamed of; all that I would have longed to see, to understand, to know, to taste, all that my insatiable, poor, and weak spirit had touched upon with a useless hope, all that toward which it had been tempted to soar, without being able to tear asunder the chains of ignorance that held it.

Ah! I have coveted all, and delighted in nothing. I should have required the vitality of a whole race, the varying intelligence, all the faculties, all the powers scattered among all beings, and thousands of existences in reserve; for I bear within myself every desire and every curiosity, and I am compelled to see all, and grasp nothing.

From whence, therefore, arises this anguish at living, since to the generality of men it only brings satisfaction? Wherefore this unknown torture which preys upon me? Why should I not know the reality of pleasure, expectation, and possession?

It is because I carry within me that second sight which is at the same time the power and despair of writers. I write because I understand and suffer from all that is, because I know it too well, and above all, because without being able to enjoy it, I contemplate it inwardly in the mirror of my thoughts.

Let no one envy, but rather pity us, for in the following manner does the literary man differ from his fellow creatures.

For him no simple feeling any longer exists. All he sees, his joys, his pleasures, his suffering, his despair, all instantaneously become subjects of observation. In spite of all, in spite of himself, he analyzes everything, hearts, faces, gestures, intonations. As soon as he has seen, whatever it may be, he must know the wherefore. He has not a spark of enthusiasm, not a cry, not a kiss that is spontaneous, not one instantaneous action done merely because it must be done, unconsciously, without reflection, without understanding, without noting it down afterward.

If he suffers, he notes down his suffering, and classes it in his memory; he says to himself as he leaves the cemetery, where he has left the being he has loved most in the world: "It is curious what I felt; it was like an intoxication of pain, etc. . . ." And then he recalls all the details, the attitude of those near him, the discordant gestures of feigned grief, the insincere faces, and a thousand little insignificant trifles noted by the artistic observation—the sign of the cross made by an old woman leading a child, a ray of light through a window, a dog that crossed the funeral procession, the effect of the hearse under the tall yew trees in the

cemetery, the face of the undertaker and its muscular contractions, the strain of the four men who lowered the coffin into the grave, a thousand things in fact that a poor fellow suffering with all his heart, soul, and strength would never have noticed.

He has seen all, noticed all, remembered all, in spite of himself, because he is above all a literary man, and his intellect is constructed in such a manner that the reverberation in him is much more vivid, more natural, so to speak, than the first shock, the echo more sonorous than the original sound.

He seems to have two souls, one that notes, explains, comments each sensation of its neighbor, the natural soul common to all men, and he lives condemned to be the mere reflection of himself or others; condemned to look on, and see himself feel, act, love, think, suffer, and never be free like the rest of mankind, simply, genially, frankly, without analyzing his own soul after every joy and every agony.

If he converses, his words often wear the air of slander, and that only because his thoughts are clear-sighted, and that he cannot refrain from investigating the secret springs which regulate the feelings and actions of others.

If he writes, he cannot refrain from throwing into his books all that he has seen, all he has gathered, all he knows; he makes no exception in favor of friends or relations, but he pitilessly lays bare the hearts of those he loves or has loved, with a cruel impartiality—exaggerating even to make the effect more powerful—wholly absorbed by his work, and in no wise by his affections.

And if he loves, if he loves a woman, he will dis-

sect her, as he would a corpse in a hospital. All she says, all she does, is instantly weighed in the delicate scales of observation which he carries within him, and is docketed according to its documentary importance. If in an unpremeditated impulse she throws herself on his neck, he will judge the action, considering its opportuneness, its correctness, its dramatic power, and will tacitly condemn it, if he feels it artificial or badly done.

Actor and spectator of himself and of others, he is never solely an actor, like the good folk who take life easily. Everything around him becomes transparent, hearts, deeds, secret intentions; and he suffers from a strange malady, a kind of duality of the mind, that makes of him a terribly vibrating and complicated piece of machinery, fatiguing even to himself.

Owing to his peculiarly morbid sensibility, he is no happier than one flayed alive, to whom nearly every sensation becomes a torture.

I can remember dark days, in which my heart was so lacerated by things I had only caught sight of for a second that the memory of those visions, has remained within me like grievous wounds.

One morning, in the Avenue de l'Opéra, in the midst of a stirring and joyous crowd, intoxicated with the sunlight of the month of May, I suddenly caught sight of a creature for whom one could find no name, an old woman bent double, dressed in tatters that had been garments, with an old straw bonnet stripped of its former ornaments, the ribbons and flowers having disappeared in times immemorial. And she went by, dragging her feet along so painfully that I felt in my heart, as much as she did, more than she could, the aching pain of each of



her steps. Two sticks supported her. She passed along without seeing any one, indifferent to all—to the noise, the crowd, the carriages and the sun! Where was she going? She carried something in a paper parcel hanging by a string. What was it? Bread? Yes, without a doubt. Nobody, no neighbor had been able or willing to do this errand for her, and she had undertaken herself the terrible journey from her garret to the baker. At least two hours must she spend, going and coming. And what a mournful struggle! Surely as fearful a road as that of Christ on his way to Calvary!

I raised my eyes toward the roofs of the tall houses. She was going up there! When would she get there? How many panting pauses on the steps, in the little stairway so black and winding?

Every one turned round to look at her! They murmured "Poor woman!" and passed on. Her skirt, her rag of a skirt hardly holding to her dilapidated body, dragged over the pavement. And there was a mind there! A mind? No, but fearful, incessant, harassing suffering! Oh, the misery of the aged without bread, the aged without hope, without children, without money, with nothing before them but death; do we ever think of it? Do we ever think of the aged famished creatures in the garrets? Do we think of the tears shed by those dimmed eyes, once bright, joyous, full of happy emotion.

Another time, it was raining, I was alone, shooting in the plains of Normandy, plodding through the deep-plowed fields of greasy mud, that melted and slipped under my feet. From time to time, a part-ridge overtaken, hiding behind a clod of earth, flew off heavily through the downpour. The report of my gun, smothered by the sheet of water that fell

from the skies, hardly sounded louder than the crack of a whip, and the gray bird fell, its feathers bespattered with blood.

I felt sad unto tears, tears as plentiful as the showers that were weeping over the world, and over me; my heart was filled with sadness and I was overcome with fatigue, so that I could hardly raise my feet, heavily coated as they were with the clay soil. I was returning home when I saw in the middle of the fields the doctor's gig following a cross-road.

The low black carriage was passing along, covered by its round hood and drawn by a brown horse, like an omen of death wandering through the country on this sinister day. Suddenly it pulled up, the doctor's head made its appearance, and he called out:

"Here."

I went toward him, and he said:

"Will you help me to nurse a case of diphtheria? I am all alone, and I want some one to hold the woman, while I take out the false membrane from her throat."

"I'll come with you," I replied, and I got into his carriage.

He told me the following story:

Diphtheria, terrible diphtheria that suffocates unhappy creatures, had made its appearance at poor Martinet's farm.

Both the father and son had died at the beginning of the week. The mother and daughter were now in their turn dying.

A neighbor who attended to them, feeling suddenly unwell, had taken flight the day before, leaving the door wide open, and abandoning the two sick

people on their straw pallets, alone, without anything to drink, choking, suffocating, dying; alone, for the last twenty-four hours!

The doctor had cleaned out the mother's throat and made her swallow; but the child, maddened by pain and the anguish of suffocation, had buried and hidden its head in the straw bedding, absolutely refusing to allow itself to be touched.

The doctor, accustomed to such scenes, repeated in a sad and resigned voice:

"I cannot really spend all day with these patients. By Jove! these do give one a heart-ache. When you think that they have remained twenty-four hours without drinking! The wind blew the rain in on to their very beds. All the hens had taken shelter in the fireplace."

We had reached the farm. The doctor fastened his horse to the bough of an apple tree before the door, and we went in. A strong smell of sickness and damp, of fever and moldiness, of hospital and cellar, greeted our nostrils as we entered. In this gray and dismal house, fireless and without sign of life, it was bitterly cold; the swampy chill of a marsh. The clock had stopped; the rain fell down into the great fireplace, where the hens had scattered the ashes, and we heard in a dark corner the noise of a pair of bellows, husky and rapid. It was the breathing of the child. The mother, stretched out in a kind of large wooden box, the peasant's bed, and covered with old rags and old clothes, seemed to rest quietly. She slightly turned her head toward us.

The doctor inquired:

"Have you got a candle?"

She answered in a low, depressed tone:

"In the cupboard."

He took the light, and led me to the farther end of the room toward the little girl's crib.

She lay panting, with emaciated cheeks, glistening eyes, and tangled hair, a pitiable sight. At each breath deep hollows could be seen in her thin, strained neck. Stretched out on her back, she convulsively clutched with both hands the rags that covered her, and directly she caught sight of us, she turned her face away, and hid herself in the straw.

I took hold of her shoulders, and the doctor, forcing her to open her mouth, pulled out of her throat a long white strip of skin, which seemed to me as dry as a bit of leather.

Her breathing immediately became easier, and she drank a little. The mother, raising herself on her elbow, watched us. She stammered out:

"Is it done?"

"Yes, it's done."

"Are we going to be left all alone?"

A terror, a terrible terror shook her voice, the terror of solitude, of loneliness, of darkness, and of death that she felt so near to her.

I answered:

"No, my good woman, I will stay till the doctor sends you a nurse."

And, turning toward the doctor, I added:

"Send old Mother Mauduit; I will pay her."

"Very well, I'll send her at once."

He shook my hand and went out; and I heard his gig drive off, over the damp road.

I was left alone with the two dying creatures.

My dog Paf had lain down in front of the empty hearth, and this reminded me that a little fire would be good for us all. I therefore went out to seek for wood and straw, and soon a bright flame lit up the

whole room, and the bed of the sick child, who was again gasping for breath.

I sat down and stretched out my legs in front of the fire.

The rain was beating against the window panes, the wind rattled over the roof. I heard the short, hard wheezing breath of the two women, and the breathing of my dog, who sighed with pleasure, curled up before the bright fireplace.

Life! life! what is it? These two unhappy creatures, who had always slept on straw, eaten black bread, suffered every kind of misery, were about to die! What had they done? The father was dead, the son was dead. The poor souls had always passed for honest folk, had been liked and esteemed as simple and worthy fellows!

I watched my steaming boots and my sleeping dog, and there arose within me, a shameful and sensual pleasure, as I compared my lot with that of these slaves.

The little girl seemed to choke, and suddenly the grating sound became an intolerable suffering to me, lacerating me like a dagger, which at each stroke penetrated my heart.

I went toward her:

"Will you drink?" I said.

She moved her head to say yes, and I poured a few drops of water down her throat, but she could not swallow them.

The mother, who was quieter, had turned round to look at her child; and all at once a feeling of dread took possession of me, a sinister dread that passed over me, like the touch of some invisible monster. Where was I? I no longer knew! Was I dreaming? What horrible nightmare was this?

Is it true that such things happen? that one dies like this? And I glanced into all the dark corners of the cottage, as though I expected to see crouching in some obscure angle a hideous, unmentionable, terrifying thing, the thing which lies in wait for the lives of men, and kills, devours, crushes, strangles them; the thing that delights in red blood, eyes glistening with fever, wrinkles and scars, white hair and decay.

The fire was dying out. I threw some more wood on it, and warmed my back, shuddering in every limb. At least, I hoped to die in a good room, with doctors around my bed and medicines on the tables! And these women had been all alone for twenty-four hours in this wretched hovel, without a fire, stretched on the straw with the death-rattle in their throats! At last I heard the trot of a horse and the sounds of wheels; and the nurse came in coolly, pleased at finding some work to do, and showing little surprise at the sight of such misery.

I left her some money and fled with my dog; I fled like a malefactor, running away in the rain; with the rattle of those two throats still ringing in my ears—running toward my warm home where my servants were awaiting me and preparing my good dinner.

But I shall never forget that scene, nor many other dreadful things, that make me loathe this world.

What would I not give at times to be allowed not to think, not to feel, to live like a brute in a warm, clear atmosphere, in a country mellow with golden light, devoid of the raw, crude tones of verdure, a country of the East where I might sleep without weariness, and wake without care, where



restlessness is not anxiety, where love is free from anguish, and existence is not a burden.

I should choose there a large square dwelling, like a huge box sparkling in the sun.

From the terrace I should look upon the sea and the white winglike pointed sails of the Greek and Turkish boats, as they flit to and fro. The outer walls have hardly any apertures. A large garden, with air heavily laden under the overshadowing palm trees, forms the center of this Oriental home. Sprays of clear water shoot up under the trees, and fall back again with a slight splash, into a broad marble fountain sanded with golden dust. Here I should bathe often, between two pipes, two dreams, or two kisses.

I should have slaves, black and handsome, draped in light airy clothing, noiselessly running hither and thither over the heavy carpets.

My walls should be soft and rebounding, with the round contours of a woman's bosom, and on the divans encircling each room, numberless cushions of every shape, should permit of my reposing in every conceivable attitude.

Then, when I should tire of my delicious repose, of my immobility, of my eternal day-dream; satiated with the calm enjoyment of my own well-being, then, I would order a horse to be brought to my door—a horse black or white, as fleet as a gazelle.

And I would spring upon his back, and in a furious gallop, quaff the tingling, intoxicating air.

And I would dart like an arrow, over the glowing country, which fills the eye with delight and has all the bouquet of wine.

In the calm hour of eve, I would fly in a mad career, toward the vast horizon dyed rose color in

the setting sun. Out there all becomes rose in the twilight: the sun-burned mountains, the sand, the garments of the Arabs, the dromedaries, the horses, the tents! The rose-colored flamingoes fly upward from the marshes to the rose-colored sky, and I should scream with delight, plunged in the boundless infinite rosiness of all that surrounds me.



I should be released from the sight of the streets and the deafening noise of cabs on the pavement, from the sight of black-coated men, seated on uncomfortable chairs, as they sip their absinthe and talk over business.

I should ignore the state of the money market, political events, changes of ministry, all the useless frivolities on which we squander our short and vapid existence. Why should I undergo these worries, these sufferings, these struggles? I would rest sheltered from the wind in my bright and sumptuous dwelling.

The winged dream was floating before my closed I heard my men awakening, lighting the boat's lan-

eyelids, and over my mind as it sank to rest; when tern, and setting to work at some arduous and lengthy task.

I called out to them:

"What on earth are you doing?"

Raymond replied in a hesitating voice:

"We are getting some lines ready, sir; for we thought that you would like to fish, if it was fine enough at sunrise."

Agay during the summer is the rendezvous of all the fishermen along the coast. Whole families come here, sleeping at the inn or in the boats, eating *bouillebaisse* on the beach, under the shade of the pine trees, the resinous bark of which crackles in the sun.

I inquired:

"What o'clock is it?"

"Three o'clock, sir."

Then, without rising, I stretched out my arm, and opened the door that separated my room from the forecastle.

The two men were squatting in the low den, through which the mast passes in fitting into the step; the den was full of such strange and odd things that one might take it for a haunt of thieves; in perfect order along the partitions, instruments of all kinds were suspended: saws, axes, marling spikes, pieces of rigging, and saucepans; on the floor between the two berths a pail, a stove, a barrel with its copper circles, glistening under the immediate ray of light from the lantern which hangs between the anchor bitts, by the side of the cable tiers; and my men were busy, baiting the innumerable hooks hanging all along the fishing-lines.

"At what hour must I get up?" I asked.

"Why, now, sir, at once."

Half an hour after, we all three embarked on board the dingy, and left the *Bel-Ami* to go and spread our net at the foot of the Drammont, near the Ile d'Or.

Then when our line, some two or three hundred yards long, had sunk to the bottom, we baited three little deep-sea lines, and having anchored the boat by sinking a stone at the end of a rope, we began to fish.

It was already daylight, and I could distinctly see the coast of Saint-Raphaël, near the mouth of the Argens, and the somber mountains of the Maures, themselves running out seaward till they came to an end, far away in the open sea, beyond the gulf of Saint-Tropez.

Of all the southern coast, this is the spot I am fondest of. I love it as though I had been born there, as though I had grown up in it, because it is wild and glowing, and because the Parisian, the Englishman, the American, the man of fashion, and the adventurer have not yet poisoned it.

Suddenly the line I held in my hand quivered, I started, then felt nothing, and again a slight shock tightened the line wound round my finger, then another one more violent shook my whole hand, and with beating heart, I began to draw in the line, gently, eagerly, striving to peer through the transparent blue water, and soon I perceived in the shadow of the boat a white flash describing rapid circles.

The fish thus seen appeared to me enormous, and when on board it was no bigger than a sardine.

Then I caught many others, blue, red, yellow, green, glittering, silvery, striped, golden, speckled,

spotted, those pretty rock-fish of the Mediterranean so varied, so colored, that seem painted to please the eye; then sea-urchins covered with prickles, and those hideous monsters of the sea, conger eels.

Nothing can be more amusing than the uplifting of a sea fishing-line. What will come out of the sea? What surprise, what pleasure, or what disappointment at each hook pulled out of the water! What a thrill runs through one when from afar some large creature is perceived struggling, as it rises slowly toward us!

At ten o'clock we had returned on board the yacht, and the two men, beaming with delight, informed me that our take weighed twenty-three pounds.

I was, however, doomed to pay dearly for my sleepless night! A sick headache, the dreadful pain that racks in a way no torture could equal, shatters the head, drives one crazy, bewilders the ideas, and scatters the memory like dust before the wind; a sick headache had laid hold of me, and I was perforce obliged to lie down in my bunk with a bottle of ether under my nostrils.

After a few minutes I fancied I heard a vague murmur which soon became a kind of buzzing, and it seemed as if all the interior of my body became light, as light as air, as though it were melting into vapor.

Then followed a numbness of spirit, a drowsy, comfortable state, in spite of the persisting pain, which, however, ceased to be acute. It was now a pain which one could consent to bear, and not any longer the terrible tearing agony, against which the whole tortured body rises in protest.

Soon the strange and delightful sensation of

vacuum I had in my chest extended and reached my limbs, which in their turn became light, light as though flesh and bone had melted away and skin only remained; just enough skin to permit of my feeling the sweetness of life, and enjoy my repose. Now I found that I no longer suffered. Pain had disappeared, melted, vanished into air. And I heard voices, four voices, two dialogues, without understanding the words. At times they were but indistinct sounds, at other times a word or two reached me. But I soon recognized that these were but the accentuated buzzing of my own ears. I was not sleeping, I was awake, I understood, I felt, I reasoned with a clearness, a penetration and power which were quite extraordinary; and a joyousness of spirit, a strange intoxication, produced by the tenfold increase of my mental faculties.

It was not a dream like that created by hasheesh, nor the sickly visions produced by opium; it was a prodigious keenness of reasoning, a new manner of seeing, of judging, of estimating things and life, with the absolute consciousness, the certitude that this manner was the true one.

And the old simile of the Scriptures suddenly came back to my mind. It seemed to me that I had tasted of the tree of life, that all mystery was unveiled, so strongly did I feel the power of this new, strange, and irrefutable logic. And numberless arguments, reasonings, proofs, rose up in my mind, to be, however, immediately upset by some proof, some reasoning, some argument yet more powerful. My brain had become a battle-field of ideas. I was a superior being, armed with an invincible intelligence, and I enjoyed prodigious happiness in the sensation of my power.



This state lasted a long, long time. I still inhaled the fumes of my ether bottle. Suddenly I perceived that it was empty. And I again began to suffer.

For ten hours I endured this torture for which there is no remedy; then I fell asleep, and the next day, brisk as after convalescence, having written these few pages, I left for Saint-Raphaël.



## CHAPTER IV

### REFLECTIONS ON HUMANITY

SAINT-RAPHAËL, *April 11th.*



Our way here the weather was delightful, and a light breeze carried us over in six tacks. After rounding the Drammont, I caught sight of the villas of Saint-Raphaël hidden among the pine trees, among the little slender pines beaten all the year round by the everlasting gusts of wind from Fréjus. Then I passed between the Lions, pretty red rocks that seemed to guard the town, and I entered the port, which, choked up with sand at the farther end, obliges one to remain some fifty yards off the quay. I then went on land.

A large crowd was gathered in front of the church. Some one was being married. A priest was authorizing in Latin with pontifical grav-

ity the solemn and comical act which so disturbs mankind, bringing with it so much mirth, suffering, and tears. According to custom, the families had invited all their relatives and friends to the funeral service of a young girl's innocence, to listen to the piously indecorous ecclesiastical admonitions, preceding those of the mother, and to the public benediction bestowed on that which is otherwise so carefully veiled.

And the whole countryside, full of broad jokes, moved by the greedy and idle curiosity that draws the common herd to such a scene, had come there to see how the bride and bridegroom would comport themselves. I mingled with the crowd, and watched.

Good heavens, how ugly men are! For at least the hundredth time I noticed, in the midst of this festive scene, that, of all races, the human race is the most hideous. The whole air was pervaded by the odor of the people, the nauseous, sickening odor of unclean bodies, greasy hair and garlic, that odor of garlic exhaled by the people of the South, through nose, mouth, and skin, just as roses spread abroad their perfume.

Certainly men are every day as ugly, and smell as obnoxious, but our eyes, accustomed to the sight of them, our nostrils used to their odor, fail to distinguish their ugliness and their emanations, unless we have been spared for some time the sight and stink of them.

Mankind is hideous! To obtain a gallery of grotesque figures, fit to raise a laugh from the dead, it would be sufficient to take the ten first-comers, set them in a line, and photograph them with their irregular heights, their legs either too long or too short, their bodies too fat or too thin, their red or pale,

bearded or smooth faces, their smirking or solemn looks.

Formerly, in primeval days, the wild man, the strong naked man, was certainly as handsome as the horse, the stag, or the lion. The exercise of his muscles, a life free from restraint, the constant use of his vigor and his agility, kept up in him a grace of motion, which is the first condition of beauty, and an elegance of form, which is produced only by physical exercise. Later, the artistic nations, enamored of form, knew how to preserve this grace and this elegance in intelligent man, by the artificial means of gymnastics. The care bestowed on the body, the trials of strength and suppleness, the use of ice-cold water and vapor baths, made the Greeks true models of human beauty, and they have left us their statues, to show us what were the bodies of these great artists.

But now, O Apollo! look at the human race moving about in its festive scenes. The children rickety from the cradle, deformed by premature study, stupefied by the school life that wears out the body at fifteen years of age, and cramps the mind before it is formed, reach adolescence with limbs badly grown, badly jointed, in which all normal proportions have completely disappeared.

And let us contemplate the people in the street, trotting along in their dirty clothing! As for the peasant! Good Heavens! Let us go and watch the peasant in the fields, his gnarled, knotted frame, lanky, twisted, bent, more hideous than the barbarous types exhibited in a museum of anthropology.

In comparison how splendid are those men of bronze, the negroes; in shape, if not in face; how elegant, both in their movements and their figure, the

tall, lithe Arabs. Moreover, I have yet another reason for having a horror of crowds.

I cannot go into a theater, nor be present at any public entertainment. I at once experience a curious and unbearable feeling of discomfort, a horrible unnerving sensation, as though I were struggling with all my might against a mysterious and irresistible influence. And, in truth, I struggle with the spirit of the mob, which strives to take possession of me.

How often have I observed that the intelligence expands and grows loftier when we live alone, and that it becomes meaner and lower when we again mix among other men. The contact, the opinions floating in the air, all that is said, all that one is compelled to listen to, to hear, to answer, acts upon the mind. A flow and ebb of ideas goes from head to head, from house to house, from street to street, from town to town, from nation to nation, and a level is established, an average of intellect is created, by all large agglomerations of individuals.

The inherent qualities of intellectual initiative, of free will, of wise reflection, and even of sagacity, belonging to any individual being, generally disappear the moment that being is brought in contact with a large number of other things.

The following is a passage from a letter of Lord Chesterfield to his son (1751) which sets forth with rare humility the sudden elimination of all active qualities of the mind in every large body of people:

“ Lord Macclesfield, who had the greatest share in forming the bill, and who is one of the greatest mathematicians and astronomers in Europe, spoke afterward with infinite knowledge, and all the clear-

ness that so intricate a matter would admit of, but as his words, his periods, and his utterance were not near so good as mine, the preference was most unanimously, though most unjustly, given to me.

"This will ever be the case; every numerous assembly is *mob*, let the individuals who compose it be what they will. Mere reason and good sense is never to be talked to a mob; their passions, their sentiments, their senses, and their seeming interests are alone to be applied to.

"Understanding they have collectively none, etc. . . ."

This deep observation of Lord Chesterfield's, a remark, however, that has often been made, and noted with interest by philosophers of the scientific school, constitutes one of the most serious arguments against representative government.

The same phenomenon, a surprising one, is produced each time a large number of men are gathered together. All these persons, side by side, distinct from each other, of different minds, intelligences, passions, education, beliefs, and prejudices, become suddenly, by the sole fact of their being assembled together, a special being, endowed with a new soul, a new manner of thinking in common, which is the unanalyzable resultant of the average of these individual opinions.

It is a crowd, and that crowd is a person, one vast collective individual, as distinct from any other mob as one man is distinct from any other man.

A popular saying asserts that "the mob does not reason." Now why does not the mob reason, since each particular individual in the crowd does reason? Why should a crowd do spontaneously what none of the units of the crowd would



have done? Why has a crowd irresistible impulses, ferocious wills, stupid enthusiasms that nothing can arrest, and, carried away by these thoughtless impulses, why does it commit acts that none of the individuals composing it would commit alone?

A stranger utters a cry, and behold! a sort of frenzy takes possession of all, and all, with the same impulse, which no one tries to resist, carried away by the same thought, which instantaneously becomes common to all, notwithstanding different castes, opinions, beliefs, and customs, will fall upon a man, murder him, drown him, without a motive, almost without a pretext, whereas each one of them, had he been alone, would have precipitated himself, at the risk of his life, to save the man he is now killing.

And in the evening, each one on returning home will ask himself what passion or what madness had seized him, and thrown his nature and his temperament out of its ordinary groove; how he could have given way to this savage impulse?

The fact is, he had ceased to be a man, to become one of a crowd. His personal will had become blended with the common will, as a drop of water is blended with and lost in a river.

His personality had disappeared, had become an infinitesimal particle of one vast and strange personality, that of the crowd. The panics which take hold of an army, the storms of opinion which carry away an entire nation, the frenzy of dervish dances, are striking examples of this identical phenomenon.

In short, it is not more surprising to see an agglomeration of individuals make one whole, than to see molecules that are placed near each other form one body.

To this mysterious attraction must without doubt be attributed the peculiar temperament of theater audiences, and the strange difference of judgment, that exists between the audience of general rehearsals and that of the audience of first representations, and again between the audience of a first representation and that of the succeeding performances, and the change in the telling effects, from one evening to another; and the errors of judgment condemning a play like *Carmen*, which afterward turns out an immense success.

What I say about crowds must be applied to all society, and he who would carefully preserve the absolute integrity of his thought, the proud independence of his opinion, and look at life, humanity, and the universe as an impartial observer free from prejudice, preconceived belief and fear, must absolutely live apart from all social relations; for human stupidity is so contagious that he will be unable to frequent his fellow creatures, even see them, or listen to them, without being, in spite of himself, influenced on all sides by their conversations, their ideas, their superstitions, their traditions, their prejudices, which by their customs, laws, and surprisingly hypocritical and cowardly code of morality will surely contaminate him.

Those who strive to resist these lowering and incessant influences struggle in vain amid petty, irresistible, innumerable, and almost imperceptible fetters; and through sheer fatigue soon cease to fight.

But a backward movement took place in the crowd; the newly married couple were coming out. And immediately I followed the general example, raised myself on tiptoe to see—and longed to see—with a stupid, low, repugnant longing, the longing of

the common herd. The curiosity of my neighbors had intoxicated me; I was one of a crowd.

To fill up the remainder of the day I decided on taking a row in my dingy up the Argens. This lovely and almost unknown river separates the plains of Fréjus from the wild mountain range of the Maures.

I took Raymond, who rowed me along the side of the low beach to the mouth of the river, which we found impracticable and partly filled up with sand. One channel only communicated with the sea; but so rapid, so full of foam, of eddies, and of whirlpools, that we were unable to ascend it.

We were therefore obliged to drag the boat to land, and carry it over the sand hills to a kind of beautiful lake formed by the Argens at this spot.

In the midst of a green and marshy country, of that rich green tint given by trees growing out of water, the river sinks down between two banks, so covered with verdure, and with such high, impenetrable foliage, that the neighboring mountains are barely visible; it sinks down, still winding, still looking like a peaceful lake, without showing or betraying that it continues twisting its way through the calm, lonesome, and magnificent country.

As in the low Northern plains, where the springs ooze out under the feet, running over and vivifying the earth like blood, the clear, cold blood of the soil; so here we find again the same strange sensation of exuberant nature which floats over all damp countries.

Birds, with long legs dangling as they fly, spring up from among the reeds, stretching their pointed beaks heavenward; while others, broad-winged and slow, pass from one bank to another with heavy

flight, and others, smaller and more rapid, skim along the surface of the river, darting forward like rebounding pebbles. Innumerable turtle-doves cooing on the heights, or wheeling about, fly from tree to tree, and seem to exchange messages of love. One feels a sensation that all around this deep water, throughout all this plain, up to the foot of the mountains, there is yet more water; the deceitful water of the marsh, sleeping yet living; broad clear sheets, in which the skies are mirrored, over which the clouds flit by; in which, widely scattered, all manner of strange rushes spring up; the fertile limpid water, full of rotting life and deathly fermentation; water breeding fever and miasma, at the same time food and poison, spreading itself out in attractive loveliness over the mysterious mass of putrefaction beneath it. The atmosphere is delightful, relaxing, and dangerous. Over all the banks which separate the vast still pools, amid all the thick grasses, swarms, crawls, jumps, and creeps a whole world of slimy, repugnant, cold-blooded animals. I love those cold, subtle animals that are generally avoided and dreaded; for me there is something sacred about them.

At the hour of sunset the marsh intoxicates and excites me. After remaining all day a silent pond lying hushed in the heat, it becomes at the moment of twilight a fairy-like and enchanted country. In its calm and boundless depths the skies are mirrored: skies of gold, skies of blood, skies of fire; they sink in it, bathe in it, float and are drowned in it. They are there up above, in the immensity of the firmament, and they are there below, beneath us, so near and yet so completely beyond our touch, in that shallow pool, through which the pointed grasses

push their way like bristling hairs. All the color with which earth has been endowed, charming, varied, and enthralling, appears to us deliciously painted, admirably resplendent, and infinitely shaded around a single leaf of the water-lily. Every shade of red, rose, yellow, blue, green, and violet are there, in a little patch of water which shows us the heavens, and space, and dreamland, and the flight of the birds as they skim across its face; and then there is still something else—I know not what—in the marshes beheld in the setting sun. I feel therein a confused revelation of some unknown mystery, an original breath of primeval life, which is, perhaps, nothing more than the bubble of gas rising from a swamp at the fall of day.



## CHAPTER V

### THE POWER OF PRINCELY PHRASES

SAINT-TROPEZ, *April 12th.*



WE left Saint-Raphaël at about eight o'clock this morning, with a strong northwest breeze.

The sea in the gulf, though it had no waves, was white with foam, white like a mass of soapsuds, for the wind, the terrible wind from Fréjus which blows almost every morning, seemed to throw itself on the water, as though it would tear it to pieces, raising a rolling mass of little waves of froth, scattered one moment, reformed the next.

The people at the port having assured us that this squall would fall toward eleven o'clock, we decided upon starting with three reefs in, and the storm jib. The dingy was placed on board at the foot of the mast, and the *Bel-Ami* seemed to fly directly it left the jetty. Although it carried scarcely any sail, I had never felt it dash along like this. One



might have thought that it hardly touched the water, and one would never have suspected that it carried at the bottom of its large keel, two and a half yards deep, a slab of lead weighing over thirty hundred-weight, besides thirty-eight hundred-weight of ballast in its hold, and all we had on board in the shape of rigging, anchors, cables, and furniture.

I had soon crossed the bay, at the farther end of which the Argens throws itself into the sea; and as soon as I was under shelter of the coast the breeze completely fell. It is there that the splendid, somber, and wild region begins which is still called the land of the Moors. It is a long peninsula, composed of mountains, with a contour of coasts over sixty miles long.

Saint-Tropez, situated at the entry of the lovely gulf, formerly called Gulf of Grimaud, is the capital of the little Saracen kingdom, of which nearly every village, built on the summit of a peak in order to secure it from attack, is still full of Moorish houses with arcades, narrow windows, and inner courtyards, wherein tall palm trees have grown up, and are now higher than the roofs.

If one penetrates on foot into the unknown valleys of this strange group of mountains, one discovers an incredible country, devoid of roads and lanes; without even footpaths, without hamlets, without houses.

At intervals, after seven or eight hours' walking, appears a hovel, often abandoned, or sometimes inhabited by a poverty-stricken family of charcoal burners.

The Monts des Maures have, it appears, a system of geology peculiar to themselves, a matchless flora

said to be the most varied in Europe, and immense forests of pines, chestnuts, and cork trees.

Some three years ago I made an excursion into the very heart of the country, to the ruins of the Chartreuse de la Verne, and have retained an ineffaceable recollection of it. If it is fine to-morrow I shall return there.

A new road follows the sea, going from Saint-Raphaël to Saint-Tropez. All along this magnificent avenue, opened up through the forest by the side of a matchless beach, new winter resorts are being started. The first one planned is called Saint-Aigulf.

This bears a peculiar stamp. In the midst of a forest of fir trees stretching down to the sea, wide roads are laid out in every direction. There is not a house, nothing but the barely indicated plan of the streets, running through the trees. Here are the squares, the cross-roads, and the boulevards. The names are even written upon metal tablets: Boulevard Ruysdaël, Boulevard Rubens, Boulevard Van Dyck, Boulevard Claude Lorrain. One wonders at all these painters' names. Why, indeed? Simply because the Company has decided, like God before he lit the sun: "This shall be an artists' resort!"

The Company! No one knows in the rest of the world all this word contains of hopes, dangers, money gained, and money lost on the Mediterranean shores! The Company! Fatal and mysterious word, deep and deceitful!

In this instance, however, the Company seems to have realized its expectations, for it has already found purchasers, and of the best, among artists. At various places one reads: "Building lot bought by M. Carolus Duran; another by M. Clairin, an-

other by Mlle. Croizette, etc." Nevertheless—who can tell? The Mediterranean Companies are not in luck just now. Nothing is more ludicrous than this fury of speculation, which generally ends in terrible failures. Whosoever has gained ten thousand francs (four hundred pounds) over his field at once buys ten millions (four hundred thousand pounds) worth of land at twenty sous (tenpence) the metre, in order to sell it again at twenty francs (sixteen shillings). Boulevards are traced, water is conveyed, gas works are prepared, and the purchaser is hopefully expected.

The purchaser does not make his appearance, but, instead of him—ruin.

Far off in front of me I perceive the towers and the buoys that mark the breakers on both sides at the opening of the Gulf of Saint-Tropez.

The first tower is called Tour des Sardinaux, and marks a regular shoal of rocks, level with the top of the water, some of which just show the tips of their brown heads; the second one has been christened Balise de la sèche à l'huile "Buoy of the oily scuttle-fish."

We now reach the entrance of the gulf, which extends back between two ridges of mountains and forests as far as the village of Grimaud, built at the very extremity, on a height. The ancient castle of Grimaldi, a tall ruin that overlooks the village, appears in the distant haze like the evocation of some fairy scene.

The wind has fallen. The gulf looks like an immense calm lake, into which, taking advantage of the last puffs of the squall, we slowly make our way.

To the right of the channel, Sainte-Maxime, a

little white port, is mirrored in the water, which reflects the houses topsy-turvy, and reproduces them as distinctly as on shore. Opposite, Saint-Tropez appears, guarded by an old fort.

At seven o'clock *Bel-Ami* anchored by the quay, at the side of the little steamboat which carries on the service with Saint-Raphaël. The only means of communication between this isolated little port and the rest of the world is by this *Lion de Mer*, an old pleasure yacht, which runs in connection with a venerable diligence, that carries the letters and travels at night by the one road which crosses the mountains.

This is one of those charming and simple daughters of the sea, one of those nice modest little towns which, fed upon fish and sea air and breeder of sailors, is as much a produce of the sea as any shell. On the jetty stands a bronze statue of the Bailli de Suffren.

The pervading smell is one of fish and smoking tar, of brine and hulls. The stones in the streets glitter like pearls, with the scales of the sardines, and along the walls of the port a population of lame and paralyzed old sailors bask in the sun on the stone benches. From time to time they talk of past voyages, and of those they have known in bygone days, the grandfathers of the small boys running yonder. Their hands and faces are wrinkled, tanned, browned, dried by the wind, by fatigue, by the spray, by the heat of the tropics and by the icy cold of Northern seas, for they have seen, in their roamings over the ocean, the ins and outs of the world, every aspect of the earth and of all latitudes. In front of them, propped upon a stick, passes and repasses the old captain of the merchant service, who for-

merly commanded the *Trois-Sœurs*, or the *Deux-Amis*, or the *Marie-Louise*, or the *Jeune-Clémentine*.

All salute him, like soldiers answering the roll-call, with a litany of "Good day, captain," modulated in many tones.

This is a true land of the sea, a brave little town, briny and courageous, which fought in days of yore against the Saracens, against the Duc d'Anjou, against the wild corsairs, against the Connétable de Bourbon, and Charles Quint, and the Duc de Savoie, and the Duc d'Epéron. In 1637 the inhabitants, fathers of these peaceful citizens, without any assistance, repelled the Spanish fleet, and every year they renew with surprising realism the representation of the attack and their defence, filling the town with noisy bustle and clamor, strangely recalling the great popular festivities of the middle ages.

In 1813 the town likewise repulsed an English flotilla that had been sent against it.

Now it is a fishing town, and the produce of its fisheries supplies the greater part of the coast with tunny, sardines, lous, rock lobsters, and all the pretty fish of this blue sea.

On setting foot on the quay, after having dressed myself, I heard twelve o'clock strike, and I perceived two old clerks, notary or lawyers' clerks, going off to their midday meal, like two old beasts of burden, unbridled for a few minutes while they eat their oats at the bottom of a nosebag.

Oh, liberty, liberty! Our sole happiness, sole hope, sole dream! Of all the miserable creatures, of all classes of individuals, of all orders of workers, of all the men who daily fight the hard battle of life, these are the most to be pitied, on these does fortune bestow the fewest of her favors.

No one believes this—no one knows it. They are powerless to complain; they cannot revolt; they remain gagged and bound in their misery, the shame-faced misery of quill-drivers.

They have gone through a course of study, they understand law, they have taken a degree, perhaps.

How dearly I like that dedication by Jules Vallès:

“To all those who, nourished upon Greek and Latin, have died of starvation.”

And what do they earn, these starvelings? Eight to fifteen hundred francs (thirty-two to sixty pounds) a year!

Clerks in gloomy chambers, or clerks in office, you should read every morning over the door of your fatal prison Dante's famous phrase:

“Abandon hope, all ye who enter here!”

They are but twenty when they first enter, and will remain till sixty or longer. During this long period not an event takes place! Their whole life slips away in the dark little bureau, ever the same, carpeted with green portfolios. They enter young, at the age of vigorous hopes; they leave in old age, when death is at hand. All the harvest of recollections that we make in a lifetime, the unexpected events, our loves—gentle or tragic memories—our adventures, all the chances of a free existence, are unknown to these convicts.

The days, the weeks, the months, the seasons, the years, all are like. They begin the day's work at the same hour; at the same hour they breakfast; at the same hour they leave; and this goes on for sixty or seventy years. Four accidents only constitute landmarks in their existence: marriage, the birth of the first-born, and the death of father or



mother. Nothing else; stop, though; yes, a rise in salary. They know nothing of ordinary life, nothing of the world! Unknown to them are the days of cheerful sunshine in the streets, and idle wanderings through the fields, for they are never released before the appointed hour. They become voluntary prisoners at eight o'clock in the morning, and at six the prison doors are opened for them, when night is at hand. But, as a compensation, they have, for a whole fortnight in the year, the right—a right indeed much discussed, hardly bargained for and grudgingly granted—to remain shut up in their lodgings. For where can they go without money?

The builder climbs skyward; the driver prowls about the streets; the railway mechanic traverses woods, mountains, plains; moves incessantly from the walls of the town to the vast blue horizon of the sea. The employé never quits his bureau, his coffin, and in the same little mirror wherein he saw himself a young fellow with fair mustache, the day of his arrival, he contemplates himself bald and white-bearded on the day of his dismissal. Then all is finished, life is played out, the future closed. How can he have reached this point? How can he have grown old without any event having occurred, without having been shaken by any of the surprises of existence? It is so, nevertheless. He must now make way for the young, for the young beginners!

Then the unfortunate mortal steals away, more wretched than before, and dies almost immediately from the sudden snapping of the long and obstinate habit of his daily routine, the dreary routine of the same movements, the same actions, the same tasks at the same hours.

As I went into the hotel for breakfast, an alarm-

ingly big packet of letters and papers was handed to me, and my heart sank as at the prospect of some misfortune. I have a fear and a hatred of letters; they are bonds. Those little squares of paper bearing my name seem to give out a noise of chains as I tear them open—of chains linking me to living creatures I have known or know.

Each one inquires, although written by different hands: "Where are you? What are you doing? Why disappear in this way, without telling us where you are going? With whom are you hiding?" Another adds: "How can you expect people to care for you if you run away in this fashion from your friends? It is positively wounding to their feelings."

Well, then, don't attach yourselves to me! Will no one endeavor to understand affection without joining thereto a notion of possession and despotism? It would seem as if social ties could not exist without entailing obligations, susceptibilities, and a certain amount of subserviency. From the moment one has smiled upon the attentions of a stranger, this stranger has a hold upon you, is inquisitive about your movements, and reproaches you with neglecting him. If we get as far as friendship, then each one imagines himself to have certain claims; intercourse becomes a duty, and the bonds which unite us seem to end in slip knots which draw tighter. This affectionate solicitude, this suspicious jealousy, eager to control, and to cling, on the part of beings who have met casually, and who fancy themselves linked together because they have proved to be mutually agreeable, arises solely from the harassing fear of solitude which haunts mankind upon this earth.

Each of us, feeling the void around him, the unfathomable depth in which his heart beats, his thoughts struggle, wanders on like a madman, with open arms and eager lips, seeking some other being to embrace. And embrace he does, to the right, to the left, at haphazard, without knowing, without looking, without understanding, that he may not feel alone. He seems to say, from the moment he has shaken hands: "Now, you belong to me a little. You owe me some part of yourself, of your life, of your thoughts, of your time." And that is why so many people believe themselves to be friends who know nothing whatever of each other, so many start off hand in hand, heart to heart, without having really had one good look at one another. They must care for some one, in order not to be alone, their affections must be expended in friendship or in love, but some vent must be found for it incessantly. And they talk of affection, swear it, become enthusiastic over it, pour their whole heart into some unknown heart found only the evening before, all their soul into some chance soul with a face that has pleased. And from this haste to become united arise all the surprises, mistakes, misunderstandings, and dramas of life.

Just as we remain lonely and alone, notwithstanding all our efforts, so in like manner we remain free, notwithstanding all our ties.

No one ever belongs to another. Half unconsciously we lend ourselves to the comedy—coquettish or passionate—of possession, but no one really gives himself—his ego—to another human being. Man, exasperated by this imperious need to be the master of some one, instituted tyranny, slavery, and marriage. He can kill, torture, imprison, but the

human will inevitably escapes him, even when it has for a few moments consented to submission.

Do mothers even possess their children? Does not the tiny being but just entered into the world set to work to cry for what he wants, to announce his separate existence and proclaim his independence?

Does a woman ever really belong to you? Do you know what she thinks, whether even she really adores you? You kiss her sweet body—waste your whole soul on her perfect lips; a word from your mouth or from hers—one single word—is enough to put between you a gulf of implacable hatred!

All sentiments of affection lose their charm when they become authoritative. Because it gives me pleasure to see and talk with some one, does it follow that I should be permitted to know what he does and what he likes? The bustle of towns, both great and small, of all classes of society, the mischievous, envious, evil-speaking, calumniating curiosity, the incessant watchfulness of the affections and conduct of others, of their gossip and their scandals, are they not all born of that pretension we have to control the conduct of others, as if we all belonged to each other in varying degrees? And we do in fact imagine that we have some rights over them, and on their life, for we would fain model it upon our own; on their thoughts, for we expect them to be of the same style as our own; on their opinions, in which we will not tolerate any difference from ours; on their reputation, for we expect it to conform to our principles; on their habits, for we swell with indignation when they are not according to our notions of morality.

I was breakfasting at the end of a long table, in

the Hotel Bailli de Suffren, and still occupied with the perusal of my letters and papers, when I was disturbed by the noisy conversation of some half-dozen men, seated at the other end.

They were commercial travelers. They talked on every subject with assurance, with contempt, in an airy, chaffing, authoritative manner, and they gave me the clearest, the sharpest feeling of what constitutes the true French spirit; that is to say, the average of the intelligence, logic, sense, and wit of France. One of them, a great fellow with a shock of red hair, wore the military medal, and also one for saving life—a fine fellow. Another, a fat little roundabout, made puns without ceasing, and laughed till his sides ached at his own jokes, before he would leave time to the others to understand his fun. Another man, with close-cut hair, was reorganizing the army and the administration of justice, reforming the laws and the constitution, sketching out an ideal republic to suit his own views, as a traveler in the wine trade. Two others, side by side, were amusing each other thoroughly with the narrative of their *bonnes fortunes*; adventures in back parlors of shops and conquests of maids-of-all-work.

And in them I saw France personified, the witty, versatile, brave, and gallant France of tradition.

These men were types of the race, vulgar types, it is true, but which have but to be poetized a little to find in them the Frenchman such as history—that lying and imaginative old dame—shows him to us.

And it is really an amusing race, by reason of certain very special qualities, which one finds absolutely nowhere else.

First and foremost it is their versatility, which so agreeably diversifies both their customs and their institutions. It is this which makes the history of their country resemble some surprising tale of adventure in a *feuilleton*, of which the pages "to be continued in the next number" are full of the most unexpected events, tragic, comic, terrible, grotesque. One may be angry or indignant over it, according to one's way of thinking, but it is none the less certain that no history in the world is more amusing and more stirring than theirs.

From the pure art point of view—and why should one not admit this special and disinterested point of view in politics as well as in literature?—it remains without a rival. What can be more curious and more surprising than the events which have been accomplished in the last century?

What will to-morrow bring forth? This expectation of the unforeseen is, after all, very charming. Everything is possible in France, even the most wildly improbable drolleries and the most tragic adventures.

What could surprise them? When a country has produced a Joan of Arc and a Napoleon, it may well be considered miraculous ground.

And then, the French love women; they love them well, with passion and with airy grace, and with respect.

Their gallantry cannot be compared to anything in any other country.

He who has preserved in his heart the flame of gallantry which burned in the last centuries surrounds women with a tenderness at once profound, gentle, sensitive, and vigilant. He loves everything that belongs to them, everything that comes from



them, everything that they are, everything they do. He loves their toilet, their knickknacks, their adornments, their artifices, their naïvetés, their little perfidies, their lies, and their dainty ways. He loves them all, rich as well as poor, the young and even the old, the dark, the fair, the fat, the thin. He feels himself at his ease with them and among them. There he could remain indefinitely, without fatigue, without ennui, happy in the mere fact of being in their presence.

He knows how, from the very first word, by a look, by a smile, to show them that he adores them, to arouse their attention, to sharpen their wish to please, to display for his benefit all their powers of seduction. Between them and him there is established at once a quick sympathy, a fellowship of instincts, almost a relationship through similarity of character and nature.

Then begins between them and him a combat of coquetry and gallantry, a mysterious and skirmishing sort of friendship is cemented, and an obscure affinity of heart and mind is drawn closer.

He knows how to say what will please them, how to make them understand what he thinks; how to make known, without ever shocking them, without offending their delicate and watchful modesty, the admiration, discreet yet ardent, always burning in his eyes, always trembling on his lips, always alight in his veins. He is their friend and their slave, the humble servitor of their caprices and the admirer of their persons. He is ever at their beck and call, ready to help them, to defend them, as secret allies. He would love to devote himself to them, not only to those he knows slightly, but to those he knows not at all, to those he has never even seen.

He asks nothing of them but a little pretty affection, a little confidence, or a little interest, a little graceful friendliness, or even sly malice.

He loves in the street the woman who passes by and whose glance falls upon him. He loves the young girl with hair streaming down her shoulders, who, a blue bow on her head, a flower in her bosom, moves with slow or hurried step, timid or bold eye, through the throng on the pavements. He loves the unknown ones he elbows, the little shopwoman who dreams on her doorstep, the fine lady who lazily reclines in her open carriage.

From the moment he finds himself face to face with a woman, his heart is stirred and his best powers are awakened. He thinks of her, talks for her, tries to please her, and to let her understand that she pleases him. Tender expressions hover on his lips, caresses in his glance; he is invaded by a longing to kiss her hand, to touch even the stuff of her dress. For him, it is women who adorn the world and make life seductive.

He likes to sit at their feet for the mere pleasure of being there; he likes to meet their eye, merely to catch a glimpse of their veiled and fleeting thoughts; he likes to listen to their voice solely because it is the voice of woman.

It is by them and for them that the Frenchman has learned to talk and to display the ready wit which distinguishes him.

To talk! What is it? It is the art of never seeming wearisome, of knowing how to invest every trifle with interest, to charm no matter what be the subject, to fascinate with absolutely nothing.

How can one describe the airy, butterfly touch upon things by supple words, the running fire of wit,

the dainty fitting of ideas, which should all go to compose talk?

The Frenchman is the only being in the world who has this subtle spirit of wit, and he alone thoroughly enjoys and comprehends it.

His wit is a mere flash, and yet it dwells; now the current joke, now the wit which illumines the national literature.

That which is truly innate is wit in the largest sense of the word, that vast breath of irony or gayety which has animated the nation from the moment it could think or speak; it is the pungent raciness of Montaigne and Rabelais, the irony of Voltaire, of Beaumarchais, of Saint-Simon, and the extinguishable laughter of Molière.

The brilliant sally, the neat epigram, is the small change of this wit. And, nevertheless, it is yet an aspect of it, a characteristic peculiarity of the national intelligence. It is one of its keenest charms. It is this that makes the skeptical gayety of Paris life, the careless cheerfulness of their manners and customs. It is part and parcel of the social amenity.

Formerly these pleasant jests were made in verse; nowadays they appear in prose. They are called, according to their date, epigrams, *bons mots*, traits, hits, *gauloiseries*. They fly through town and drawing-room, they spring up everywhere, on the boulevard as well as Montmartre. And those of Montmartre are often just as good as those of the boulevard; they are printed in the papers; from one end of France to the other they excite laughter. For, at least, the French know how to laugh.

Why should one good thing more than another, the unexpected, quaint juxtaposition of two terms,

two ideas or even two sounds, a ridiculous pun, some unexpected cock-and-bull story, open the flood-gates of our gayety, causing explosions of mirth fit to blow up all Paris and the provinces like a mine?

Why do all the French laugh, while all the English and all the Germans can understand nothing of the fun? Why? Solely and wholly because they are French, because they possess the intelligence which is peculiar to the French, and because they possess the delightful, enviable gift of laughter.

With them, moreover, a little mother wit enables any government to hold its own.

Good spirits take the place of genius; a neat saying consecrates a man at once and makes him great for all posterity. The rest matters little. The nation loves those who amuse it and forgives everything to those who can make it laugh.

A glance thrown over the past history of France will make us understand that the fame of their great men has only been made by flashes of wit. The most detestable princes have become popular by agreeable jests, repeated and remembered from century to century.

The throne of France is maintained by the cap and bells of the jester.

Jests, jests, nothing but jests, ironic or heroic, polished or coarse—jesters float forever to the surface in their history, and make it like nothing so much as a collection of puns and witticisms.

Clovis, the Christian king, cried on hearing the story of the Passion:

“Why was I not there with my Franks?” This prince, in order to reign alone, massacred his allies and his relatives, and committed every crime im-

aginable. Nevertheless, he is looked upon as a pious and civilizing monarch.

“ Why was I not there with my Franks? ”

We should know nothing of good King Dagobert if the song had not apprised us of a few particulars, no doubt erroneous, of his existence.

Pepin, wishing to remove the King Chilpéric from the throne, proposed to Pope Zacharias the following insidious question:

“ Which of the two is the most worthy to reign: he who worthily fulfills all the kingly functions without the title or he who bears the title without knowing how to reign? ”

What do we know of Louis VI? Nothing. Pardon! In the battle of Brenneville, when an Englishman laid hands upon him, crying, “ The King is taken,” this truly French monarch replied, “ Do you not know, knave, that a king can never be taken, even at chess? ”

Louis IX, saint though he was, has not left a single good saying to remember him by. In consequence his reign appears to the French a wearisome episode, full of orisons and penances.

That noodle, Philip VI, beaten and wounded at the battle of Crécy, cried as he knocked at the gates of the castle of Arbroie: “ Open! Here are the fortunes of France! ” They are still grateful to him for this melodramatic speech. John II, made prisoner by the Prince of Wales, remarks, with chivalrous good will and the graceful gallantry of a French troubadour: “ I had counted upon entertaining you at supper to-night, but fortune wills otherwise and ordains that I should sup with you.”

It would be impossible to bear adversity more gracefully.

"It is not for the King of France to avenge the quarrels of the Duke of Orléans" was the generous declaration of Louis XII. And it is, truly, a kingly saying, one worthy of the remembrance of all princes.

That hare-brained fellow, Francis I, more apt at the pursuit of the fair sex than at the conduct of a campaign, has saved his reputation and surrounded his name with an imperishable halo by writing to his mother those few superb words, after the defeat of Pavia: "All is lost, Madame, save honor."

Does not that phrase remain to this day as good as a victory? Has it not made this Prince more illustrious than the conquest of a kingdom? We have forgotten the names of the greater number of the famous battles fought in these long bygone days, but shall we ever forget "All is lost, save honor?"

Henry IV! Hats off, gentlemen! Here is the master! Sly, skeptical, tricky, deceitful beyond belief, artful beyond compare, a drunkard, debauchee, unbeliever, he managed by a few happy and pointed sayings to make for himself in history an admirable reputation as a chivalrous, generous king, a brave, loyal, and honest man.

Oh, the cheat! Well did he know how to play upon human stupidity!

"Hang yourself, brave Crillon; we have gained the day without you."

After a speech like this, a general is always ready to be hanged or killed for his master's sake.

At the opening of the famous Battle of Ivry: "Children, if the colors fall, rally to my white plumes; you will find them always on the road to honor and victory."



How could a man fail to be victorious who knew how to speak thus to his captains and his troops?

This skeptical monarch wishes for Paris, he longs for it, but he must choose between his faith and the beautiful city: "Enough," he murmurs; "after all, Paris is well worth a mass!" And he changes his religion as he would have changed his coat. Is it not a fact, however, that the witticism caused a ready acceptance of the deed? "Paris is well worth a mass" raised a laugh among the choicer spirits and there was no violent indignation over the change.

Has he not become the patron of all fathers of families by the question put to the Spanish ambassador who found him playing at horses with the Dauphin: "Are you a father, Monsieur l'Ambassadeur?"

The Spaniard replied: "Yes, sire."

"In that case," said the King, "we will go on."

But he made a conquest for all eternity of the heart of France, of the *bourgeoisie*, and of the people, by the finest phrase that prince ever pronounced—a real inspiration of genius, full of depth, heartiness, sharpness, and good sense.

"If God prolongs my life, I hope to see in my kingdom no peasant so poor that he cannot put a fowl in the pot for his Sunday's dinner."

It is with words such as these that enthusiastic and foolish crowds are flattered and governed. By a couple of clever sayings Henry IV has drawn his own portrait for posterity. One cannot pronounce his name without at once having a vision of the white plumes and delicious flavor of a *poule-au-pot*.

Louis XIII made no happy hits. This dull king had a dull reign.

Louis XIV created the formula of absolute personal power: "The State is myself."

He gave the measure of royal pride in its fullest expansion: "I have almost had to wait."

He set the example of sonorous political phrases which make alliances between two nations: "The Pyrenees exist no longer!"

All his reign is in these few phrases.

Louis XV, most corrupt of kings, elegant and witty, has bequeathed to posterity that delightful keynote of his supreme indifference: "After me, the deluge."

If Louis XVI had been inspired enough to perpetrate one witticism, he might possibly have saved his kingdom. With one *bon mot* might he not perhaps have escaped the guillotine?

Napoleon I scattered around him by handfuls the sayings that were suited to the hearts of his soldiers.

Napoleon III extinguished with one brief phrase all the future indignation of the French nation in that first promise: "The Empire is peace." The Empire is peace! Superb declaration, magnificent lie! After pronouncing that, he might declare war against the whole of Europe without having anything to fear from his people. He had found a simple, neat, and striking formula, capable of appealing to all minds, and against which facts would be no argument.

He made war against China, Mexico, Russia, Austria, against all the world. What did it matter? There are people yet who speak with sincere conviction of the eighteen years of tranquillity he gave to France: "The Empire is peace."

And it was also with his keen words of satire,

phrases more mortal than bullets, that M. Rochefort laid the Empire low, riddling it with the arrows of his wit, cutting it to shreds and tatters.

The Maréchal MacMahon himself has left as a souvenir of his career to power: "Here I am, here I remain!" And it was by a shaft from Gambetta that he was, in his turn, knocked down: "Submission or dismissal."

With these two words, more powerful than a revolution, more formidable than the barricades, more invincible than an army, more redoubtable than all the votes, the tribune turned out the soldier, crushed his glory, and destroyed his power and prestige.

As to those who govern France at this moment, they must fall, for they are devoid of wit; they will fall, for in the day of danger, in the day of disturbance, in the inevitable moment of seesaw, they will not be capable of making France laugh and of disarming her.

Of all these historical phrases, there are not ten really authentic. But what does it matter, so long as they are believed to have been uttered by those to whom they are attributed?

"Dans le pays des bossus  
Il faut l'être  
Ou le paraître,"\*

says the popular song.

Meanwhile, the commercial travelers were talking of the emancipation of women, of their rights, and of the new position in society they longed for.

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\* In the country of hunchbacks  
One must be so,  
Or at least appear so.



## CHAPTER VI

### A TRAGEDY OF THE FOREST

SAINT-TROPEZ, *April 13th.*



It was remarkably fine this morning, I started for the Chartreuse de la Verne.

Two recollections draw me toward this ruin; that of the sensation of infinite solitude and the unforgettable melancholy of the deserted cloister; and also that of an old peasant couple to whose cottage I had been taken the year before by a friend who was guiding me across this country of the Moors.

Seated in a country cart, for the road soon became impracticable for a vehicle on springs, I followed the line of the bay to its deepest point. I could see upon the opposite shore the pine woods where the Company is attempting to create another winter resort. The shore, indeed, is exquisite, and the whole country magnificent. Then the road plunges into the mountains, and soon passes through the town of Cogolin. A little farther on I quitted

it for a rough, broken lane which was scarcely more than a long rut. A river, or rather a big stream, runs by the side, and every hundred yards or so cuts through the ravine, floods it, wanders away a little, returns, loses itself again, quits its bed and drowns the track, then falls into a ditch, strays through a field of stones, appears suddenly to calm down into wisdom, and for a while follows its due course; but seized all at once by some wild fancy, it precipitates itself again into the road, and changes it into a marsh, in which the horse sinks up to the breast-plate and the high vehicle up to the driving seat.

There are no more houses, only from time to time a charcoal-burner's hut; the poorest live in absolute holes. Is it not almost incredible that men should inhabit holes in the ground, where they live all the year, cutting wood and burning it to extract the charcoal, eating bread and onions, drinking water, and sleeping like rabbits in their burrows, in narrow caverns hewn in the granite rocks? Lately, too, in the midst of these unexplored valleys, a hermit has been discovered, a real hermit, hidden there for these thirty years, unknown to any one, even to the forest rangers.

The existence of this wild man, revealed by I know not whom, was, no doubt, mentioned to the driver of the diligence, who spoke of it to the post-master, who talked of it to the telegraph clerk, male or female, who flew with the wonder to the editor of some little local paper, who made out of it a sensational paragraph, copied into all the country journals of Provence.

The police set to work to hunt out the hermit, without apparently causing him any alarm, whence

we may conclude that he had kept all needful papers by him. But a photographer, excited by the news, set off in his turn, wandered three days and three nights among the mountains, and ended by photographing some one—the real hermit some say, an impostor, others will tell you.

Last year, then, the friend who first revealed to me this strangely quaint country showed me two creatures infinitely more curious than the poor devil who had come to hide in these impenetrable woods a grief, a remorse, an incurable despair, or perhaps simply the mere ennui of living.

This is how he first discovered them. Wandering on horseback among these valleys, he suddenly came across a prosperous farm—vines, fields, and a farmhouse which looked comfortable though humble.

He entered. He was received by a woman, a peasant, about seventy years old. The husband, seated under a tree, rose and came forward to bow.

“He is deaf,” she said.

He was a fine old fellow of eighty, amazingly strong, upright, and handsome. They had for servants a laborer and a farm girl. My friend, a little surprised to meet these singular persons in the midst of a desert, inquired about them. They had been there for a long time; they were much respected, and passed for being comfortably off—that is, for peasants.

He came back several times to visit them, and little by little became the confidant of the wife. He brought her papers and books, being surprised to find that she had some ideas, or, rather, remains of ideas, which scarcely seemed those of her class. She was, however, neither well read, intelligent, nor witty; but there seemed to be, in the depths of her



memory, traces of forgotten thoughts, a slumbering recollection of a bygone education. One day she asked him his name.

"I am the Comte de X——," he said.

Moved by the obscure vanity which is lodged deep in all souls, she replied:

"I, too, am noble."

Then she went on, speaking, for certainly the first time in her life, of this piece of ancient history unknown to any one.

"I am the daughter of a colonel. My husband was a noncommissioned officer in my father's regiment. I fell in love with him, and we ran away together."

"And you came here?"

"Yes, we hid ourselves."

"And you have never seen your family since?"

"Oh, no! Don't you see, my husband was a deserter."

"You have never written to any one?"

"Oh, no!"

"And you have never heard any one speak of your family, of your father or mother?"

"Oh, no; mamma was dead."

This woman had preserved a certain childishness, the simplicity of those who throw themselves into love as if over a precipice.

He asked again:

"You have never told this to any one?"

She answered: "Oh, no! I can say it now, because Maurice is deaf. As long as he could hear, I should not have dared to mention it. Besides, I have never seen any one but the peasants since I ran away."

"At least, then, you have been happy?"

“ Oh, yes, very happy. I have been very happy. I have never regretted anything.”

Well, I also had gone last year to visit this woman, this couple, as one goes to gaze at some miraculous relic.

I had contemplated with surprise, sadness, and even a little disgust, this woman who had followed this man, this rustic Adonis, attracted by his hussar uniform, and who had continued to see him, under his peasant's rags, with the blue dolman slung over his back, sword at his side, and the high boot with clanking spur.

She had, however, become a peasant herself. In the depths of this wilderness she had become perfectly accustomed to this life without luxuries, without charm or delicacy of any sort; she had adapted herself to these simple manners. And she loved him still. She had become a woman of the people, in cap and coarse petticoat. Seated on a straw-bottomed chair at a wooden table, she ate a mess of cabbage, potatoes, and bacon from an earthenware plate. She slept on a straw mattress beside him.

She had never thought of anything but him! She had regretted neither ornaments, nor silks, nor elegance, nor soft chairs, nor the perfumed warmth of well-curtained rooms, nor repose in a comfortable bed. She had never needed anything but him! As long as he was there, she had wanted nothing else!

She was quite young when she abandoned life, the world, and those who had brought her up and loved her. Alone with him she had come to this savage ravine. And he had been everything to her, everything that could be longed for, dreamed of, expected, ceaselessly hoped for. He had filled her

life with happiness from one end to another. She could not have been happier.

Now I was going for the second time to see her again, filled with the surprise and the vague contempt with which she inspired me.

She lived near the Hyères road, on the opposite slope of the mountain on which stands the Chartrreuse de la Verne; and another carriage was awaiting me on this road, for the deep track we had followed had now ceased and become a mere footpath, only accessible to pedestrians and mules.

I started, therefore, alone, on foot, and with slow steps to climb the mountains. I was in a delightful wood, a real Corsican thicket, a fairy-tale wood composed of flowering creepers, aromatic plants with powerful scents, and huge, magnificent trees.

The granite fragments in the track sparkled as they rolled beneath my steps, and in the openings between the branches I saw sudden peeps of wide, gloomy valleys full of verdure, winding lengthily away to the distance.

I was warm. The quick blood flowed within my flesh. I felt it coursing through my veins, burning, rapid, alert, rhythmical and alluring as a song; the vast song, brutish and gay, of life in movement under the sun. I was happy, I was strong. I quickened my pace, climbed the rocks, ran, jumped, and discovered every minute a larger view, a more gigantic network of desert valleys, from whence not one single chimney sent up a wreath of smoke.

Then I reached the top, dominated by other heights, and after making some circuit, perceived on the slope of the mountain before me a bleak ruin, a heap of dark stones and of ancient buildings supported by lofty arcades. To reach it it was

necessary to go round a large ravine and to cross a chestnut grove. The trees, old as the abbey itself, enormous, mutilated, and dying, had survived the building. Some have fallen, no longer able to sustain the weight of years; others, beheaded, have now only a hollow trunk in which ten men could conceal themselves. And they look like a formidable army of giants, who, in spite of age and thunderbolts, are ready still to attempt the assault of the skies. In this fantastic wood one feels the mouldy touch of centuries, the old, old life of the rotting roots, amid which, at the feet of these colossal stumps, nothing can grow. For among the gray trunks the ground is of hard stones, and a blade of grass is rare.

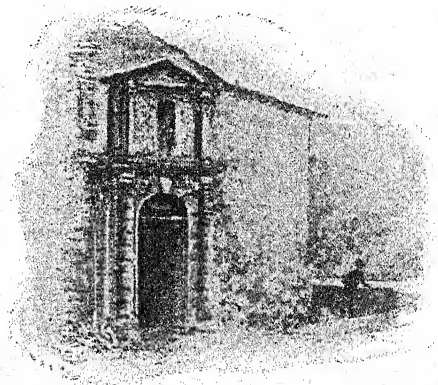
Here are two fenced springs or fountains, kept as drinking places for the cows.

I approach the abbey, and find myself face to face with the old buildings, the most ancient of which date back to the twelfth century, while the more recent are inhabited by a family of shepherds.

In the first court one sees by the traces of animals that a remnant of life still haunts the spot; then, after traversing crumbling and tumbling halls, like those of all ruins, one reaches the cloister, a long and low walk still under cover, surrounding a tangled square of brambles and tall grasses. In no spot in the world have I felt such a weight of melancholy press upon my heart as in this ancient and sinister cloister, true pacing court of monks. Certainly the forms of the arcades and the proportions of the place contribute to my emotion, to my heart-ache, and sadden my soul by their action on my eyes, exactly as the happy curve of some cheering bit of architecture would rejoice them. The man who

built this retreat must have been possessed with a despairing heart to have an inspiration so desolate and dreary. One would fain weep and groan within these walls; one longs to suffer, to reopen all the wounds of one's heart, to enlarge and make the very utmost of all the sorrows compressed within it.

I climbed upon a breach in the wall, to see the view outside, and I understood my emotion. Nothing living around, nothing anywhere but death. Behind the abbey, a mountain ascending up to the sky,



around the ruins the chestnut grove, in front a valley, and beyond that more valleys—pines, pines, an ocean of pines, and on the far horizon pines still on the mountain tops.

And I left the place.

I crossed next a wood of cork trees, where, a year ago, I had experienced a shock of strong and moving surprise.

It was on a gray day of October, at the time when they strip the bark of these trees, to make corks of it. They strip them thus from the foot to

the first branches, and the denuded trunk becomes red, a blood red, as of a flayed limb. They have grotesque and twisted shapes, the look of maimed creatures writhing in epileptic fits, and I suddenly fancied myself transported into a forest of tormented beings, a bleeding and Dantesque forest of hell, where men had roots, where bodies deformed by torture resembled trees, where life ebbed incessantly, in never-ending torment, by these bleeding wounds, which produced upon me the tension of the nerves and faintness that sensitive people feel at the sudden sight of blood or the unexpected shock of a man crushed or fallen from a roof. And this emotion was so keen, this sensation so vivid, that I imagined I heard distracting cries and complaints, distant and innumerable. I touched one of these trees, to reassure my fainting spirit, and I fancied I beheld my hand, as I drew it back, covered with blood.

To-day they are cured—till the next barking.

At length the road appears, passing near the farm which has sheltered the long happiness of the noncommissioned officer of hussars and the colonel's daughter.

From afar I recognize the old man walking among the vines. So much the better; the wife will be alone in the house.

The servant was washing in front of the door.

"Your mistress is here?" I said.

She replied, with a singular look, in the accent of the South:

"No, sir; since six months she is no more."

"She is dead?"

"Yes, sir."

"And of what?"

The woman hesitated, then muttered:



"She is dead—dead, I tell you."

"But of what?"

"Of a fall, then!"

"A fall! Where from?"

"From the window."

I gave her a few pence.

"Tell me about it," I said.

No doubt she strongly wished to talk of it; no doubt, too, she had often repeated this history for the last six months, for she retailed it at great length, as a story well known by heart and invariable in its repetition.

Then I learned that for thirty years the old deaf man had had a mistress in the neighboring village, and that his wife, having learned this by chance from a passing carter who spoke of it without knowing who she was, rushed panting and bewildered to the attic, and there hurled herself from the window; not, perhaps, with deliberate purpose, but impelled by the torture of the horrible agony caused by her discovery, which goaded her forward in an irresistible gust of passion, like a whip lashing and cutting. She had flown up the staircase, burst open the door, and without knowing, without being able to stop her headlong speed, had continued to run straight ahead and had leaped into empty space.

*He* had known nothing of it; he did not know even now; he would never know, because he was deaf. His wife was dead, that was all. All the world must die some time or other!

I could see him at a distance, giving orders by signs to his laborers.

Then I caught sight of the carriage which was waiting for me in the shade of a tree, and I returned to Saint-Tropez.



## CHAPTER VII

### A COMIC OPERA KINGDOM



WAS going to bed yesterday evening, although it was only nine o'clock, when a telegram was handed to me. A friend, one of my dearest, sent me this message: "I am at Monte Carlo for four days, and have been telegraphing to you at every port on the coast. Come to me at once."

And behold, the wish to see him, the longing to talk, to laugh, to gossip about society, about things, about people; the longing to slander, to criticise, to blame, to judge, to chatter, was alight within me in a moment, like a conflagration. On that morning, even, I should have been furious at this recall, yet in the evening I was enchanted at it. I wished myself already there, with the great dining room of the restaurant full of people before my eyes, and in my ears that murmur of voices in which the numbers of the roulette table dominate all other sounds like the *Dominus vobiscum* of the church.

I called Bernard.

"We shall start at about four o'clock in the morning for Monaco," I said to him.

He replied philosophically:

"If it is fine, sir."

"It *will* be fine."

"The barometer is going down, though."

"Pooh! it will go up again."

The mariner smiled an incredulous smile.

I went to bed and to sleep.

It was I who woke the men. It was dark and a few clouds hid the sky. The barometer had gone down still more.

The two men shook their heads with a distrustful air.

I repeated:

"Pooh! It will be fine. Come, let us be off!"

Bernard said:

"When I can see the open, I know what I am about; but here in this harbor, at the end of this gulf, one knows nothing, sir; one can see nothing. There might be a fearful sea on without our knowing anything about it."

I replied:

"The barometer has gone down, therefore we shall not have an east wind. Now, if we have a west wind, we can put into Agay, which is only six or seven miles off." The men did not seem much reassured; however, they got ready to start.

"Shall we take the dingy on deck?" asked Bernard.

"No; you will see it will be quite fine. Let it tow astern, as usual."

A quarter of an hour later we had quitted the harbor and were running through the entrance of the gulf to a light and intermittent breeze.

I laughed.

"Well, you see the weather is good enough."

Soon we had passed the black and white tower built upon the Rabiou shoal, and although sheltered by Cape Camarat, which runs far out into the open sea, and of which the flashing light appeared from minute to minute, the *Bel-Ami* was already lifted forward by long, powerful, slow waves; those hills of water which move on, one behind the other, without noise, without shock, without foam, menacing without fury, alarming in their very tranquillity.

One saw nothing, one only felt the ascent and descent of the yacht over the dark and silently moving waters.

Bernard said:

"There has been a gale out at sea to-night, sir; we shall be lucky if we get in without accident."

The day broke brightly over the wild, crowding waves, and we all three looked anxiously seaward to see if the squall were returning.

All this time the boat was running a great pace before the wind and with the tide. Already Agay appeared on our beam, and we held counsel whether we should make for Cannes, to escape the rough weather, or for Nice, running to seaward of the isles.

Bernard would have preferred Cannes; but as the breeze did not freshen, I decided in favor of Nice.

For three hours all went well, though the poor little yacht rolled like a cork in the awful swell.

No one who is unacquainted with the open sea, that sea of mountains, moving with weighty and rapid strides, separated by valleys which change place from second to second, filled up and formed

again incessantly, can guess, can imagine the mysterious, redoubtable, terrifying, and superb force of the waves.

Our little dingy followed far behind us, at the extremity of forty yards of hawser, through this liquid and dancing chaos. We lost sight of it every moment, then suddenly it would reappear, perched on the summit of a wave, floating along like a great white bird.

Here is Cannes in the depth of its bay, Saint-Honorat with its tower standing up among the waves, and before us the Cape d'Antibes.

The breeze freshened little by little, and the crests of the waves became flocks of sheep, those snowy sheep which move so fast, and of which the countless troop careers along without dog or shepherd under the endless sky.

Bernard said to me:

"It will be all we shall do to make Antibes."

And, indeed, seas began to break over us with inexpressible and violent noise. The sharp squalls shook us, throwing us into yawning gulfs, whence, as we emerged, we righted ourselves with terrible shocks.

The gaff was lowered, but at every oscillation of the yacht the boom touched the waves and seemed ready to tear away the mast, which, if it should fly away with the sail, would leave us to float alone and lost upon the wild waves.

Bernard cried out:

"The dingy, sir!"

I turned to look. A huge wave filled it, rolled it over, enveloped it in foam as if it would devour it, and, breaking the hawser by which it was made fast to us, took possession of it, half sinking, drowned; a

conquered prey which it will presently throw upon the rocks down there below the headland.

The minutes seem hours. Nothing can be done. We must go on, round the point in front of us, and when we have done that we shall be sheltered and in safety.

At last we reach it. The sea is now calm and smooth, protected as it is by the long tongue of rocks and earth which forms the Cape of Antibes,

There is the harbor from which we started only a few days ago, although it seems to me we have been voyaging for months, and we enter just as noon is striking.

The men are radiant on finding themselves back again, though Bernard repeats at every other moment:

"Ah, sir, our poor little boat! It went to my heart to see it go down like that!"

As for me, I took the four o'clock train, to go and dine with my friend in the principality of Monaco.

I wish I had time to write at length about this surprising state; smaller than many a village in France, but wherein one may find an absolute sovereign, bishops, an army of Jesuits and seminarists more numerous than that of the ruler, an artillery the guns of which are nearly all rifled, an etiquette more ceremonious than that of his lamented Majesty Louis XIV, principles of authority more despotic than those of William of Prussia, joined to a magnificent toleration for the vices of humanity, on which, indeed, live both sovereign, bishop, Jesuits, seminarists, ministers, army, magistrates, every one, in short.

Hail to this great pacific monarch, who, without



fear of invasion or revolution, reigns peacefully over his happy little flock of subjects, in the midst of court ceremonies which preserve intact the traditions of the four reverences, the twenty-six hand-kissings, and all the forms used once upon a time around great rulers.

This monarch, moreover, is neither sanguinary nor vindictive, and when he banishes, for he does banish sometimes, the measure is put in force with the utmost delicacy.

Is a proof needful?

An obstinate player, on a day of ill luck, insulted the sovereign. A decree was issued for his expulsion.

During a whole month he prowled around the forbidden paradise, fearing the sword-blade of the archangel in the guise of the saber of the policeman. One day, however, he hardened his heart, crossed the frontier, reached the very center of the kingdom in thirty seconds, and penetrated into the precincts of the Casino. But suddenly an official stopped him.

"Are you not banished, sir?"

"Yes, sir; but I leave by the next train."

"Oh, in that case it is all right. You can go in."

And every week he came back, and each time the same functionary asked him the same question, to which he invariably gave the same answer.

Could justice be more gentle?

Within the last few years, however, a very serious and novel case occurred within the kingdom.

This was an assassination.

A man, a native of Monaco, not one of the wandering strangers of whom one meets legions on these

shores—a husband, in a moment of anger, killed his wife; killed her without rhyme or reason, without any excuse that could be accepted.

Indignation was unanimous throughout the principality.

The supreme court met to judge this exceptional case—a murder had never taken place before—and the wretch was with one voice condemned to death.

The indignant sovereign ratified the sentence.

There only remained to execute the criminal. Then arose a difficulty. The country possessed neither guillotine nor executioner.

What was to be done? By the advice of the Minister of Foreign Affairs, the Prince opened negotiations with France to obtain the loan of a headsman and his apparatus.

Long deliberations took place in the ministry at Paris. At last they replied by sending an estimate of the cost of moving the woodwork and the practitioner. The whole amounted to sixteen thousand francs (six hundred and forty pounds).

The monarch of Monaco reflected that the operation would cost him dear; the assassin was certainly not worth that price. Sixteen thousand francs for the head of a wretch like that? Never!

The same request was addressed to the Italian government. A king and a brother would, no doubt, show himself less exacting than a republic.

The Italian government sent in a bill which amounted to twelve thousand francs (four hundred and eighty pounds).

Twelve thousand francs! It would be necessary to impose a new tax, a tax of two francs (twenty pence) a head! This would be enough to cause serious and hitherto unknown trouble in the state.

Then they bethought them of having the villain beheaded by a simple soldier. But the general, on being consulted, replied hesitatingly that perhaps his men had scarcely sufficient practice to acquit themselves satisfactorily of a task which undoubtedly demanded great experience in the handling of the sword.

Then the Prince again assembled the Supreme Court, and submitted to it this embarrassing case.

They deliberated long, without finding any practical way out of the difficulty. At last the first president proposed to commute the sentence of death to that of life-long imprisonment, and the measure was adopted.

But they did not possess a prison. It was necessary to fit one up, and a jailer was appointed who took charge of the prisoner.

For six months all went well. The captive slept all day on a straw mattress in the nook arranged for him, and his guardian lazily reclined upon a chair before the door, while he watched the passers-by.

The Prince, however, is economical—extravagance is not his greatest fault—and he has accurate accounts laid before him of the smallest expenses of his state—the list of them is not a long one. They handed him, therefore, the bill of the expenses incurred in the creation of this new function, the cost of the prison, the prisoner, and the watchman. The salary of this last was a heavy burden on the budget of the sovereign.

At first he merely made a wry face over it; but when he reflected that this might go on forever—the prisoner was young—he requested his Minister of Justice to take measures to suppress the expense.

The minister consulted the President of the Tribunal, and the two agreed to suppress the expense of a jailer. The prisoner, thus invited to guard himself, could not fail to escape, which would solve the question to the satisfaction of all parties.

The jailer was therefore restored to his family, and it became the duty of a scullion from the palace kitchen to carry to the prisoner his morning and evening meals. But the captive made no attempt to recover his liberty.

Finally, one day, as they had neglected to furnish him with food, they beheld him tranquilly appear at the palace to claim it; and from that day forward it became his habit to come at meal times to the palace, to eat with the servants, whose friend he became, and thus save the cook the trouble of the walk to and fro.

After breakfast he would take a turn as far as Monte Carlo. He sometimes went into the Casino, to venture a five-franc piece on the green cloth. When he had won, he gave himself a good dinner at one of the most fashionable hotels; then he returned to his prison, carefully locking his door on the inside.

He never slept away a single night.

The situation became a little puzzling, not for the convict, but for the judges.

The court assembled afresh, and it was decided that they should invite the criminal to leave the State of Monaco.

When this decision was announced to him, he simply replied:

"You are pleased to be facetious. Well, and what would become of me in that case? I have no longer any means of subsistence. I have no longer

a family. What would you have me do? I was condemned to death. You did not choose to execute me. I made no complaint. I was afterward condemned to imprisonment for life, and placed in the hands of a jailer. You took away my guardian. Again I made no complaint.

"Now, to-day, you want to turn me out of the country. Not if I know it. I am a prisoner, your prisoner, judged and condemned by you. I am faithfully fulfilling my sentence. I remain here."

The Supreme Court was floored. The Prince was in a terrible rage, and ordered fresh measures to be taken.

Deliberations were resumed.

Then, at last, they decided to offer to the culprit a pension of six hundred francs (twenty-four pounds) if he would leave the state and live elsewhere.

He accepted.

He has rented a little plot five minutes' walk from the kingdom of his former sovereign, and lives happily upon his property, cultivating a few vegetables and despising all potentates.

However, the Court of Monaco has profited, though a little late, by this experience, and has made a treaty with the French government, by which they send their convicts over to France, who keeps them out of sight, in consideration of a modest compensation.

In the judicial archives of the principality one is shown the decree which settles the pension by which the rascal was induced to leave the State of Monaco.

Opposite to the palace rises the rival establishment, the Roulette. There is, however, no hatred,

no hostility between them; for the one supports the other, which in return protects the first. Admirable example; unique instance of two neighboring and powerful families living in peace in one tiny state, an example well calculated to efface the remembrance of the Capulets and the Montagues. Here, the house of the sovereign; there, the house of play; the old and the new society fraternizing to the sound of gold.

She salons of the Casino are as readily opened to strangers as those of the Prince are difficult of access.

I turn to the first.

A noise of money, continuous as that of the waves—a noise at once deep, light, and terrible—fills the ears from the moment one enters, then fills the soul, stirs the heart, troubles the mind, and bewilders thought. Everywhere this sound, this singing, crying, calling, tempting, rending sound.

Around the tables a motley crowd of players, the scum of every continent and of every society; mixed with princes, or future kings, women of fashion, *bourgeois*, money-lenders, disreputable women; a mixture unique in the world, of men of all races, of all castes, of all kinds, of every origin; a perfect museum of adventurers from Russia, Brazil, Chili, Italy, Spain, Germany; of old women with reticules, of disreputable young ones carrying little bags containing keys, a handkerchief, and the three last five-franc pieces which are kept for the green cloth when the vein of luck shall chance to return.

I approached the first table, and saw a pale face, with lined forehead and hard-set lip, features convulsed with an expression of evil—the young woman of Agay Bay, the beautiful sweetheart of the sunny



wood and the moonlit bay. He, too, is there, seated before her, his hand resting on a few napoleons.

"Play on the first square," said she.

He inquired anxiously:

"All?"

"Yes, all."

He placed the coins in a little heap.

The croupier turned the wheel. The ball ran, danced, and stopped.

"Nothing further counts," jerks forth the voice, which resumes after a moment:

"Twenty-eight."

The young woman started, and in a hard, sharp tone said:

"Come away."

He rose, and, without looking at her, followed her; and one felt that some dreadful thing had sprung up between them.

Some one remarked:

"Good-by to love. They don't look as if they were of one mind to-day."

A hand taps me on the shoulder. I turn round. It is my friend.

\* \* \* \* \*

I have only now to ask pardon for having thus trespassed on my reader by talking so much of myself. I had written this journal of day dreams entirely for myself, or, rather, I had taken advantage of my floating solitude to capture the wandering ideas which are wont to traverse our minds, like birds on the wing.

But I am asked to publish these few pages, which, unconnected, deficient in composition and in art, fol-

low one after the other without a reason, and abruptly conclude without a motive, simply because a squall of wind put an end to my voyage.

I have yielded to this request. Perhaps I am wrong.



## IN THE SUNLIGHT



LIFE, so brief, and yet so long, sometimes becomes unbearable. It rolls along, always the same, with death at the end. We can neither stop, change nor understand it. Often a feeling of indignant revolt comes over us when we perceive the uselessness of all our efforts. Whatever we may do, we die! Whatever we believe, think, attempt, we die. It seems as though we were to die to-morrow without knowing anything, although heartsick with the knowledge which we have already gained. Then we feel crushed under the sentiment of "the eternal misery of everything," with human powerlessness and the monotony of our actions.

We rise, walk, lean at our window. Opposite us the people are breakfasting, just as they did yesterday, just as they will to-morrow: father, mother, four children. Three years ago the grandmother was still there; then she died. Since we have been neighbors, the father has changed a good deal. He does not notice it; he seems contented, happy. Fool!

They talk of a wedding, then of a death, of the tender chicken which they are eating, of their servant who is dishonest. They worry over a thousand useless and foolish things. Fools!

The sight of the apartment in which they have been living for eighteen years fills me with disgust and indignation. That is life! Four walls, two doors, one window, a bed, some chairs, a table! A prison! Any place in which one lives for a long time becomes a prison! Oh! to flee, to leave, to escape from the well known places, the men, the same actions at the same hours, and above all the same thoughts!

When you are weary enough to cry from morning until night, so weary that you no longer have the strength to reach for a glass of water, tired of the friendly faces which have become irritating because they have been seen so often, sick of the odious and calm neighbors, of the familiar and monotonous objects, of your house, of your street, of your maid who comes to say: "What will Monsieur have for dinner?" and who turns away kicking up at each step the ragged edge of her dirty petticoat; when you become weary of your too faithful dog, of the unchanging designs of your hangings, of the regularity of your meals, of sleeping in the same bed, of every action repeated each day, weary even of yourself, of your own voice, of the things which you continually repeat, of the narrow field of your ideas, sick of the sight of your face in the mirror, of your expression when you shave or brush your hair—then it is time to leave, to enter into a new and changing life.

Travel is a kind of door through which we leave the known reality in order to penetrate into an unexplored reality, which seems like a dream. A station! A seaport! A train which whistles with its first escape of steam! A great steamer slowly passing the jetties in order to rush across the seas toward

new countries! Who can see that without trembling with envy, without feeling a thrill of longing for distant travels?

We all dream of some favorite country, some of Sweden, others of India; one person likes Greece and another Japan. I felt attracted to Africa by an imperious need, by a longing for the unknown desert, like a presentiment of incipient passion.

I left Paris on the 6th of July, 1881. I wished to see this land of sunlight and of sand in midsummer, under the oppressive heat, in the blinding glory of light.

Everyone knows the magnificent verses of the great poet Leconte de Lisle:

“Midi, king of the summers, spread o’er the plain,  
Drop in silv’ry sheets from the heavens above.  
All is silent. The breathless air is aflame,  
The earth is slumb’ring in its fiery robe.”

This is the *midi* of the desert, spread over the motionless and unlimited ocean of sand, which made me leave the blossoming banks of the Seine of which Madame Deshoulières sings, the fresh morning baths and the green shade of the woods, in order to cross the burning solitudes.

There was another cause which attracted me at this time especially to Algiers. The elusive Bou-Amama was carrying on that fantastical campaign which caused so many foolish things to be said and done. It was also claimed that the Mussulman population was preparing for a general insurrection, that it was going to make a last effort, and that, immediately after the Ramadan, war would break out simultaneously throughout Algiers. I became extremely curious to see the Arab at this time, to

attempt to understand his soul, a thing of which the colonists never think.

Flaubert would sometimes say: "One can imagine the desert, the pyramids, the Sphinx, without ever having seen them; but what one can not imagine is the expression of a Turkish barber squatting before his door."

Would it not be even more interesting to know what is going on in his mind?





## THE SEA



MARSEILLES is throbbing under the gay sun of a summer's day. It seems to smile with its great flag-be-decked cafés, its horses covered with straw hats as though dressed for a masquerade, its busy and noisy inhabitants. Everywhere is heard that accent which seems to be uttered as a challenge. In other places a native of Marseilles is amusing and seems to be a kind of foreigner murdering the French language; in Marseilles a combination of accents gives to it a sound which is truly farcical. To hear everyone talking like that is really too much! In the sunlight Marseilles perspires and smells of garlic and countless other things. It smells of the unnamable foods at which nibble negroes, Turks, Greeks, Italians, Maltese, Spaniards, English, Corsicans, and even the inhabitants of Marseilles lying down, sitting or idling by the wharves.

In the Joliette basin heavy steamers, their noses turned toward the entrance of the harbor and covered with men who are loading them with cargo, are getting up steam.

One of them, the *Abd-el-Kader*, suddenly begins to bellow, for the whistle no longer exists; it has been replaced by something which sounds like the roar of a wild beast, a frightful voice which comes from the smoking belly of the monster.

The great vessel leaves its anchorage, slowly passes between its motionless mates, leaves the harbor, and quickly, as the captain calls through the speaking-tube his order: "Full speed ahead," it eagerly bounds forward, opens up the sea, leaving behind it a long wake, while the coasts disappear and Marseilles sinks behind the horizon.

It is dinner-time on board. There are very few passengers, for not many people care to go to Africa in July. At the end of the table there is a colonel, an engineer, a physician, and two merchants from Algiers with their wives.

The conversation turns to the country for which we are bound and of the government which best suits it. The colonel energetically commends a military government, discusses desert tactics and declares that telegraphy is useless and even dangerous for armies. This enlightened officer must have been the victim of some misfortune of war caused by telegraph. The engineer would like to see the colony confided to the care of a bridge and road inspector who would build canals, dams, roads and a thousand other things. The captain of the ship, in a witty way, suggests that a sailor would be much more suitable for the position, as Algiers is only accessible from the sea. The two merchants point out some glaring faults of the present government; everyone laughs and wonders how a person can be so stupid. Then all go up on deck. Nothing is to be seen but the calm sea without a ripple, shimmering

under the silvery moon. The heavy vessel seems to fly over it, leaving behind a long, boiling wake, where the bubbling water seems turned to liquid fire.

The bluish-black sky stretches over our heads, dotted with stars hidden for an instant behind the enormous volume of smoke which is issuing from our funnels; the little signal at the top of the mast looks like a large star moving among the others. Nothing can be heard but the muffled roaring of the machinery in the depths of the vessel.

How charming are the peaceful evening hours on the deck of a speeding steamer!

We spend the following day dreaming under the wide awning, with the sea on all sides. Then night comes back and is again followed by day. We have slept in the narrow cabin, on a berth which is shaped like a coffin. It is four o'clock in the morning, and we must be up.

What an awakening! A long coast, and in the distance, opposite us, a white spot which grows—it is Algiers!



## ALGIERS



UNEXPECTED fairyland which delights the soul! Algiers surpassed my expectations. How pretty is this snow-white city under the dazzling light! An immense terrace follows the harbor, supported by graceful arcades. Above it rise the big European hotels and the French quarter; still above this stretches the Arab city with its strange little white houses, built one right up against the other and separated by streets which resemble lighted tunnels. The upper floor is supported by posts painted in white; the roofs touch. There are abrupt descents into habitations which are no more than holes, mysterious stairways toward dwellings which look like burrows full of swarming Arab families. A woman passes by, serious and veiled, with bare ankles covered with dust which has accumulated over the perspiration and which are by no means tempting.

From the end of the pier the view of the city is marvelous. You look with ecstasy at this splendid cascade of houses, which seem to tumble one over the other from the heights of the mountains clear down to the sea. It reminds one of the foam from a torrent, but of a dazzling whiteness; and from place to

place a snowy mosque shining in the sunlight appears like a big bubble.

Everywhere swarms a remarkable population. Countless vagabonds go about dressed in nothing but a shirt, or in two carpets sewed together in the shape of a chasuble, or in an old bag with holes cut out for the head and arms; always barelegged and barefooted, swearing and fighting, covered with vermin, ragged and smelling like beasts. Tartarin would say that they smell of the Turk, for here everything smells of the Turk.

Here there is a whole world of black-skinned youngsters, half-caste Arabs, negroes and whites, a perfect ant-hill of shoe-shiners, as bothersome as flies, thieving and bold, vicious at three years of age, as mischievous as monkeys, who insult you in their native tongue and pursue you with their eternal cry of "Shine, Monsieur!" I might mention that the Parisian coachmen can find themselves outdone in familiarity here.

The very day of my arrival I saw a little incident without any importance and yet which practically sums up the history of Algeria and of colonization.

While I was sitting before a café a young negro forcibly seized my feet and began to blacken my boots with a furious energy. After he had rubbed and polished for about half an hour and made the leather shine like a mirror, I gave him two sous. He thanked me, but did not get up. He remained squatting between my legs, quite motionless, and rolling his eyes as though he were sick. I said: "Run along." He did not answer or move; then, suddenly, snatching up his shoe-box in both arms he started to run as fast as his legs could carry him. I saw a big negro of about sixteen leave a doorway where he had been

hiding and pounce on the little fellow. In a few bounds he had caught up with him, then he slapped him, searched him, snatched away his two sous which he stuffed into his pocket and quietly walked away laughing, while the poor youngster bellowed in a heart-breaking manner.

I was indignant. My neighbor at table, an officer of the African Division, who was a friend, said: "Leave them alone, it is simply hierarchy establishing itself. As long as they are not strong enough to take money from the others, they shine shoes. But as soon as they feel themselves able to whip the smaller ones, they do nothing at all. They watch those who are blacking shoes and then rob them." Then my companion added, laughing: "Almost everybody here does the same thing."

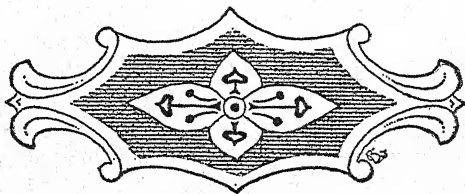
The European quarter of Algiers, pretty from a distance, has, when seen from near, the appearance of a new city built in a climate to which it is not suited. On landing, a large sign meets your eye: "Algerian Skating Rink;" and at the first few steps one is overcome, one is seized with the sensation of the misapplied progress of the country, of the brutal, awkward civilization, so little adapted to the customs, climate and people. It is we who appear to be barbarians among these barbarians; brutes though they may be, they are at home, and centuries have taught them the customs of which we do not even seem to have grasped the meaning as yet.

Napoleon III said a wise word (perhaps whispered to him by a minister): "What Algeria needs is not conquerors, but initiators." But we have only remained brutal, clumsy conquerors infatuated with our ready-made ideas. Our morals, Parisian houses, customs, offend like glaring faults in art, wisdom



and understanding. Everything that we do seems wrong, a challenge to this country, not so much to the natives as to the land itself.

A few days after my arrival I saw an open-air ball at Mustapha. It was just like the Neuilly fair. Gingerbread booths, shooting-galleries, lotteries, somnambulists, clerks dancing the regular Bullier quadrille with shop-girls, while behind the enclosure to which admission was charged, in the broad and sandy drilling field, hundreds of Arabs lay under the moon, motionless in their rags, gravely listening to the noisy choruses of the tunes to which the French people danced.





## THE PROVINCE OF ORAN



O go from Algiers to Oran takes a day on the train. At first one crosses the plain of the Mitidja, fertile, shady and populous. This is what is shown to the new arrival in order to prove to him the fertility of our colony. Certainly Mitidja and Kabylia are two admirable countries. In fact, Kabylia has a greater population to the square mile than Calais; Mitidja will soon be the same. What can one wish to develop there? But I am straying from my subject.

The train rolls forward; the cultivated fields disappear; the ground becomes bare and red—typical African soil. The horizon stretches out, sterile and burning. We follow the immense valley of Chelif, inclosed in great gray, desolate mountains, without a tree or a blade of grass. From time to time the mountains grow lower and open up as though better to show the frightful poverty of the soil, burned by the sun. An unlimited flat area stretches out, bounded in the distance by the almost

invisible heights which mingle with the horizon. At intervals on the barren peaks appear great round, white spots, like the eggs of some giant bird. They are the *marabouts* erected to the glory of Allah.

From time to time on the boundless yellow plain one sees a clump of trees and near them men standing about, tall, sunburned Europeans who are watching the train pass by; near them are little tents like big mushrooms, from which rush bearded soldiers. It is a hamlet of farmers protected by a detachment of infantry.

Along this stretch of sterile and dusty soil we can sometimes distinguish, far away in the distance, a kind of smoke, a light cloud which rises toward the sky and moves along the ground. It is a horseman whose mount is raising the fine burning dust with his hoofs. Each one of these clouds on the plain indicates a man whose almost imperceptible white burnous we at last manage to distinguish.

From time to time we come upon native encampments. We can hardly perceive these villages, established near a dried-up stream, where children lead a few goats, sheep or cows to pasture (to use the word "pasture" is truly a mockery). The brown canvas tents, surrounded by dried bushes, mingle with the monotonous color of the land. On the railroad embankment a dark-skinned man with bare, muscular and calfless legs, wrapped in whitish rags, gravely contemplates the iron steed which rushes past him. Farther on we see a group of nomads on the march. The caravan advances slowly in the dust, leaving a cloud behind it. The women and children are riding asses or small horses, and a few horsemen proceed silently in the lead, with a haughty and noble gait.

It is the same all the way along. When the train stops, about every hour, a European village appears: a few houses like those to be seen at Nanterre or Rueil; parched trees, of which one bears the blue, white and red flag in honor of the Fourteenth of July; before the gate stands a silent gendarme, exactly like the one at Rueil or Nanterre.

The heat is intolerable. It becomes impossible to touch any metal object, even in the car. The water from the gourds is hot. The air which rushes through the window seems to have been blown from the door of the furnace. At Orléansville the thermometer registers over 100° in the shade.

We get to Oran for dinner. It is a regular commercial European city, more Spanish than French, and with nothing of any special interest. In the streets one sees beautiful girls with black eyes, ivory skin and pearly teeth. When the weather is clear, it seems that one can see, away off on the horizon, the coast of Spain, their fatherland.

As soon as one puts foot on this African soil, a strange desire overcomes one—that of going farther to the south. So I bought a ticket to Saïda, and took the narrow-gauge little railroad which climbs up on the heights. Around this city roams the elusive Bou-Amama with his horsemen.

After a few hours' travel one reaches the first slopes of the Atlas range. The train goes up puffing, barely moving; it winds around the side of the arid hill, passes beside an immense lake formed by three rivers, whose water is held in by the famous Hebra dam. An immense wall, sixteen hundred feet long, holds back, over an enormous plain, forty-six million cubic feet of water.

This dam gave way the following year, drowning

hundreds of men and ruining an entire country. This happened at the time of a great national subscription for some Hungarian or Spanish flood victims. Nobody took any notice of this French disaster.

We then pass through narrow gorges between two mountains which look as though they had recently been burned, they are so red and bare; we travel around mountains, skirt along the slopes, go miles out of our way in order to avoid obstacles and then rush down at full speed into a plain, still zig-zagging a little, as though through force of habit.

The cars are small and the engine as big as that of a street railway. At times it seems worn out, puffs, chokes or sputters, goes along so slowly that one can easily follow it on foot and then suddenly starts off again madly.

The whole countryside is barren and desolate. The King of Africa, the Sun, this great and ferocious ravager, has eaten out the heart of these valleys, leaving only stones and a red dust in which nothing can grow.

Saïda is a little town in the French style which seems to be inhabited only by generals. There are at least ten or twelve of them there, and they always seem to be holding some kind of a meeting. One feels like crying to them: "Where is Bou-Amama today, General?" The civilian population has absolutely no respect for the uniform.

The inn leaves much to be desired. I lie down on a straw mattress in a white-washed room. The heat is intolerable. I close my eyes and try to sleep. Alas! my window opens on a little courtyard. I hear the dogs barking. They are far, very far away. They seem to be talking to each other. But soon they come nearer; they are up to the houses now,

among the vines, in the streets. There are five hundred, perhaps a thousand starving, ferocious dogs who watch the Spanish encampments on the heights. Once their master is killed or gone, the beasts roam around, dying of hunger; then they find the city, and they surround it like an army. During the day they sleep in the ravines, under the rocks in the caves in the mountains, and as soon as night falls they invade Saïda to search for food.

Men who come home late at night walk along with a revolver in their hands, followed and preceded by twenty or thirty yellow dogs like foxes.

They bark continuously in a frightful manner, enough to make one crazy. Then other noises are heard, the shrill yapping of the jackals which are arriving; and at times only one loud, peculiar voice can be heard, that of the hyena, imitating the bark of the dog in order to attract and devour him. This awful uproar lasts until daybreak.

Before the arrival of the French, Saïda had been protected by a little fortress erected by Abd-el-Kader. The new town is in a sort of bowl surrounded by bald rocky heights. A narrow river, across which one can almost hop, waters the neighboring fields, in which grow beautiful vineyards. To the south the neighboring mountains resemble a wall; these are the last steps leading to the high table-land. To the left rises a brilliant red rock, about a hundred and fifty feet high, with the ruins of some masonry on its summit. This is all that is left of the Saïda built by Abd-el-Kader. Seen from the distance, this rock seems to cling to the mountain; but if one climbs it, one remains speechless from surprise and admiration. A deep ravine separates this ancient fortress from the neighboring mountain.

This mountain is of reddish stone and broken, in places, by cracks where the winter rain falls. In the ravine the stream flows amid bushes of pink laurel. From above it looks like an Oriental carpet spread along a corridor. The carpet of flowers seems uninterrupted, spotted only from place to place by the green foliage which rises above the flowers.

One descends into this valley by a path used by goats.

The stream, called a river there (the Oued-Saïda)—for us a mere brook—ripples along the stones under the blossoming bushes, strikes against the rocks, foams, undulates and babbles. The water is warm, almost burning. Enormous crabs run along the banks with a strange speed, their claws open as soon as they see me. Great green lizards disappear among the leaves. At times a snake glides between the rocks.

The ravine grows narrow, as though it were going to close. A great noise above my head makes me start. An eagle, surprised, flies away from its nest, rises toward the blue sky with slow, strong motions of his wings, which seem to touch both sides of the gorge.

After about an hour one reaches the road which climbs the dusty mountain toward Aïn-el-Hadjar.

Before me plodded a bent old woman in a black skirt and white cap, carrying a basket on her left arm and in her right hand an immense red umbrella, in guise of a parasol. A woman in this country! A peasant in this mournful land where one hardly sees anything but the tall, well-built negress, covered with yellow, red or blue rags, and who leaves in her wake an odor of human flesh strong enough to upset the strongest stomachs!



Exhausted, the old woman sat down in the dust, panting from the torrid heat. Her face was crossed by countless little wrinkles such as one sees on a piece of crumpled cloth; her look was weary, depressed and desperate.

I spoke to her. She was an Alsatian who had been sent with her four sons to this desolate country after the war. She asked me:

“Do you come from over there?”

That “over there” made me sad. I answered: “Yes.”

She began to weep. Then she told me her simple little story.

They had been promised some land; and mother and children had come to this country. Now three of her sons were dead as a result of this murderous climate. The remaining one was sick, their fields, although large, yielded nothing, for they did not get a drop of water. She kept repeating: “Ashes, Monsieur, burnt ashes. We don’t even get a cabbage, not a single cabbage!” She clung to that idea of a cabbage, which, for her, seemed to be the symbol of terrestrial happiness.

I have never seen anything more pitiful than this old Alsatian woman cast away in this burning land of fire, where not even a single cabbage could grow. How often she must have thought of the old country, the green land of her youth, the poor old soul!

On leaving me, she inquired: “Do you know whether they are going to give out any lands in Tunisia? They say that the country is good over there. It would be better than here, anyhow. And then perhaps I might save my boy.”

All our colonists who have settled on the other side of the Tell might say about the same thing.

I felt a strong desire to continue farther. But the whole country was at war and I could not venture farther alone. A chance was offered me. A train was leaving to carry provisions to the troops encamped along the salt lakes.

It was a day when the sirocco was blowing. Since morning the south wind had been crossing the country in slow, heavy, devouring gusts. At seven o'clock the little convoy started out, taking along two detachments of infantry with their officers, three cistern-cars full of water and the engineers of the company, as, for the last three weeks, no train had been able to reach the end of the line, part of which the Arabs were able to destroy.

The engine, "the Hyena," starts up noisily and heads straight for the mountain as though it wished to run right through it. Then suddenly it makes a sharp curve, enters a narrow little valley, turns again and comes back, a hundred and fifty feet above the place where it had just been running. It turns again and continues up the mountain, zig-zagging and unfolding like a great ribbon until it gains the top of the mountain.

Here we find vast buildings, factory chimneys, a kind of abandoned city. They are magnificent factories of the Franco-Algerian Company. It is here that the alfalfa was prepared, before the massacre of the Spaniards. This place is called Aïn-el-Hadjar.

We continue upward. The engine puffs, groans, slows down and stops. Three times it tries to start again, three times it remains powerless. It backs up in order to get a start, but once more it stops without strength in the middle of a too steep hill.

Then the officers order the soldiers to get out and

push the train. We start up again slowly, at the speed of a man walking. All are laughing and joking; the infantrymen are making fun of the engine. At last it is all over. We are now on the high tablelands.

The engineer, leaning out of the window, keeps his eye to the track, which might at any minute be cut; we others are attentively watching the horizon, alert as soon as the slightest cloud of dust appears which might indicate a still invisible horseman. We are carrying rifles and revolvers.

At times a jackal runs by us; an enormous vulture flies away, abandoning the carcass of a camel almost entirely consumed; wild hens, which look very much like partridge, hide in the clumps of dwarf palms.

At the little station of Tafraoua two companies of infantry are at camp. Many Spaniards had been killed here.

At Kralfallah we find a company of zouaves hurriedly building up a defence, strengthening it with rails, beams, telegraph posts, bags of alfalfa, anything that they can find. We have luncheon here; and the three officers, all three young and gay, the captain, first and second lieutenant, offer us coffee.

The train starts again. It runs along endlessly through an unlimited plain to which tufts of alfalfa give the appearance of a calm sea. The sirocco becomes intolerable, fanning our faces with the burning air of the desert. At times a vague form appears on the horizon. It looks like a lake, an island, rocks in the water; it is a mirage. On a little slope we see some blackened stones and some human bones: the remains of a Spaniard. Then we see some more dead camels, all of them being eaten by the vultures.

We cross a forest. What a forest! An ocean of sand where occasional clumps of juniper trees look like heads of salad in a gigantic vegetable garden. After that we no longer see any green except the alfalfa, which grows in round tufts and covers the ground as far as one can see.

At times we think we see a horseman in the distance, but he disappears; perhaps we were mistaken.

We arrive at Oued-Fallete, which is in the middle of this gloomy and deserted stretch of land. Then I start out walking with two companions, still going southward. We climb a low hill in a scorching heat. The sirocco sheds fire; it dries the perspiration on the face as soon as it appears, burns the lips and the eyes, dries the throat. Under every stone we find scorpions.

Around the motionless convoy, which from the distance looks like a great black beast crouching on the parched ground, the soldiers are loading wagons which have been sent from the neighboring encampment. Then they move away in the dust, slowly, with a weary step, under the burning sun. We watch them for a long, long time as they plod along, and finally we can see only the gray cloud which rises over them.

Six of us now remain near the train. We can no longer touch anything; everything burns. The brass trimmings of the cars seem to have been reddened by fire. We let out a cry of pain if we happen to touch the barrel of a gun.

A few days ago the tribe of Rezaïna went over to the rebels and crossed the salt lake which we had been unable to reach, as we were forced to turn back. The heat had been so intense as the fugitive tribe crossed this dried-up swamp that all their mules died from thirst, as well as sixteen children who passed away in their mothers' arms.

The engine whistles. We leave Oued Fallette. A strange occurrence made this place famous at this time.

A post was established there, guarded by the 15th Infantry. Well, one night, two Arabs, who had ridden ten hours to carry a message from the commanding general at Saïda, arrived at the outposts. According to the custom, they waved a torch in order to make themselves known. The sentinel, a recruit fresh from France, ignorant of the rules and customs and who had not been informed by his superiors, fired at the messengers. The poor devils advanced, nevertheless; the whole post runs to arms; the men take their positions and a terrible fusillade begins. After about a hundred and fifty shots, the two Arabs finally retreat, one of them with a bullet in his shoulder. The following day they returned to headquarters, bringing with them their despatches.



## BOU-AMAMA



It would be a clever man who could say even to-day exactly who or what was Bou-Amama. This elusive joker, after harassing our African division, disappeared so completely that people are beginning to doubt whether he actually existed.

Trustworthy officers, who believed that they knew him, described him to me; but other no less truthful people, sure of having seen him, depicted him in an entirely different manner.

At any rate, this prowler was only the head of a small band of men, probably driven to revolt by starvation. These men only fought to rob farms or to pillage convoys. They seemed to have been moved neither by hatred nor by religious fanaticism, but by hunger. Our method of colonization being to ruin the Arabs, to rob them without cease, to pursue them without mercy, to make them die of misery, we shall see many more insurrections.

Perhaps another cause for this campaign is the presence of Spanish cultivators on the high plateau.

In this ocean of alfalfa, in this desolate green stretch, motionless under the burning sky, lived a veritable nation, hordes of brown-skinned men, ad-

venturers whom misery or other reasons had driven from their fatherland. More savage, more feared than the Arabs, isolated, far from any city, law or force, they acted, it is said, as did their forefathers in a new country; they were violent, bloodthirsty, terrible to the primitive people. The vengeance of the Arabs was fearful. Here, in a few lines, is the apparent origin of the revolt.

Two Mussulman priests were openly preaching revolt in a southern tribe. Lieutenant Weinbrunner was sent out against them with the mission of capturing the chief of this tribe. The French officer had an escort of four men. He was murdered.

Colonel Innocenti was commanded to avenge this death and he was given the assistance of the agha of Saïda.

On the road the followers of the agha met the Trafis, who were also on their way to join Colonel Innocenti. Quarrels arose between the two tribes; the Trafis turned around and went over to Bou-Amama. It is here that occurred the affairs of Chel-lala, which has already been told many times. After his convoy had been sacked, Colonel Innocenti, who seems to have been accused by public sentiment, returned to Kreïder by forced marches in order to get reënforcements, thus leaving the road entirely clear to his adversaries, who took advantage of the fact.

Let me mention a strange fact. On the same day official despatches reported Bou-Amama at the same time in two different places about a hundred miles apart.

This chief, profiting by the liberty which had been given him, passed within five miles of Géryville. On the way he killed Brigadier Bringéard, who had been sent out into a rebellious country with only a few



men in order to establish telegraphic communications; then he proceeded northward.

He then crossed the territory of the Hassassenas and of the Harrars, and actually gave the command to these two tribes for the general massacre of the Spaniards which they were to carry out shortly afterward.

At last he arrived at Aïn-Kétifa, and two days later he was camping at Haci-Tirsine, only ten miles from Saïda.

The military authorities at last becoming disturbed, on the evening of the tenth of June warned the Franco-Algerian Company to call in all its agents, as the country was not safe. Trains ran all night to the extreme limit of the line; but it was impossible in a few hours to gather in all the cultivators spread over a territory of a hundred miles, and on the eleventh, at daybreak, the massacres began.

They were carried out principally by the two tribes, the Hassassenas and the Harrars, who were exasperated at seeing the Spaniards live on their lands.

And yet, on the pretext of not wishing to incite them to rebellion, nothing was done to these two tribes who massacred almost three hundred people—men, women and children. Arab horsemen found loaded with spoils, with the dresses of Spanish women hidden under their saddles, were released, it is said, on pretext that proofs were lacking. So, on the evening of the tenth, Bou-Amama was camping at Haci-Tirsine, twenty-two miles from Saïda. At the same time General Cérez was telegraphing to the governor that the rebel chief was trying to return south.

During the following days the bold marabout pillaged the villages of Tafraoua and of Kralfallah, loading down his camels with spoils, carrying away several million francs' worth of provisions and merchandise.

Once more he returned to Hacı-Tirsine in order to reorganize his troop; then he divided his convoy in two parts, one of which went toward Aïn-Kétifa. There it was stopped and pillaged by the *goum* of Sharraoui (*division Brunetière*).

The other section, commanded by Bou-Amama himself, found itself caught between General Détrie's column encamped at El-Maya and that of Col. Mallaret posted near Kreïder, at Ksar-el-Krelifa. He had to pass between the two camps, a task which was by no means easy. Then Bou-Amama sent out a detachment of cavalry to the camp occupied by General Détrie, who pursued it with its whole detachment as far as Aïn-Sfisifa, away beyond the Chott, persuaded that he was on the track of the marabout. The trick succeeded. The road was clear. The day after the general's departure the rebel chief was occupying his camp; this was the fourteenth of June.

On the other hand, Colonel Mallaret, instead of guarding the passage at Kreïder, had pitched his camp at Ksar-el-Krelifa, two miles farther on. Bou-Amama immediately sent out a strong detachment of cavalry to pass in front of the Colonel, who contented himself with firing the six cannon-shot which have become legendary. And during this time the convoy of loaded camels was quietly passing the salt lake at the Kreïder, the only point where it was easy. From there the marabout must have left his provisions with his tribe, the Mogrars, about two hundred miles south of Géryville.

From whom does all this precise information come? will be asked. From everybody. Naturally, some will dispute one point, others another. I can affirm nothing, as I did nothing but gather the information which seemed to me most likely. It seems to be impossible, in Algeria, to obtain accurate information about a thing which occurred a mile from where one happens to be. As for military news, it seemed, during this whole campaign, to have been supplied by some practical jokers. Bou-Amama was reported, on the same day, at six different points by six different officers who thought that they held him. A complete collection of official despatches, with a little supplement containing those from authorized agencies, would make a very amusing book. Certainly, messages whose improbability was too evident were stopped in the offices at Algiers.

A witty caricature, made by one of the colonists, seemed to have explained the situation very well. It represented a fat old general, covered with gold braid, with a heavy mustache, facing the desert. He was watching with a perplexed look the immense stretch of land, bare and undulating, whose limits could not be perceived, and he was murmuring: "They are out there—somewhere!" Then turning around to one of his staff officers, standing motionless behind him, he exclaimed in a firm voice: "Telegraph the government that the enemy is before me and that I am starting in its pursuit."

The only reliable information which could be obtained came from Spanish prisoners escaped from Bou-Amama. I was able, through an interpreter, to talk with one of these men, and this is what he told me:

He called himself Blas Rojo Pélisaire. On the evening of the tenth of June he and his comrades

were leaving a convoy of seven carts, when along the road, they found other carts broken, and between the wheels the murdered drivers. One of them was still living. They began to take care of him; but a troop of Arabs rushed upon them. The Spaniards had but one gun—they surrendered; nevertheless, all were massacred with the exception of Blas Rojo; who was probably spared on account of his youth and good looks. It is known that Arabs are not indifferent to manly beauty. He was led to camp, where he found other prisoners. At midnight one of them was killed without any reason. He was a mechanic (a man whose duty it was to take care of the brakes of the carts) called Domingo. The following day was the eleventh. Blas learned that other prisoners had been killed during the night. It was the day of the great massacres. They remained in the same place. Then, in the evening, the horsemen brought in two women and a child.

On the twelfth they broke camp, marching all day. On the thirteenth, in the evening, they camped at Dayat-Kered.

On the fourteenth they marched in the direction of Ksar-Krelifa. This was the day of the Mallaret affair. The prisoner did not hear the cannon, which fact leads us to believe that Bou-Amama sent off a detachment of cavalry to file past the French line, while the convoy of plunder with which was Blas crossed the salt lake a few miles further up, well sheltered.

For a week they zig-zagged aimlessly about the country. When they arrived at Tis-Moulins, the quarreling leaders separated, each taking along his own prisoners.

Bou-Amama was kindly to the prisoners, espe-

cially to the women, whom he put in a special tent and had guarded.

One of them, a beautiful girl of about eighteen, was forced, along the road, to live with a Trafi chief, who threatened her with death if she were to resist. But the chief refused to sanction their union.

Blas Rojo was attached to Bou-Amama's service, but he did not see him. He only saw his son, who directed the military operation. He looked to be about thirty. He was tall, thin, bronzed yet pale, with large eyes, and he wore a small beard. He owned two chestnut horses, one of which, a French one, seemed to have belonged to Commander Jacquet.

The prisoner had no knowledge of the Kreïder affair.

Blas Rojo managed to escape in the neighborhood of Bas-Yala, but, not knowing the country very well, he was forced to follow dry river-beds, and after walking for three days and three nights he arrived at Marhoun. Bou-Amama had with him five hundred cavalrymen and three hundred infantry, plus a convoy of camels destined to carry the booty.

For two weeks after the massacres trains ran day and night on the little railroad along the salt lakes. They were continually gathering in poor mutilated Spaniards and tall, beautiful girls, naked and bleeding. The inhabitants of the country say that the military authorities could have avoided this butchery with a little foresight. At any rate, they could not manage a handful of rebels. Why were our perfected weapons powerless against the old-fashioned Arab muskets? That is for others to find out and explain.

The Arabs, at any rate, have over us one advan-

tage against which we vainly strive. They are natives. Living on a few figs and a pinch of flour, tireless in this climate which exhausts men from the north, riding horses as sober as themselves and like them immune from heat, they can ride sixty or seventy-five miles a day. Having neither baggage, convoys nor provisions to drag along with them, they move with surprising rapidity, pass between the camps of two columns in order to attack and pillage a village which is thought to be perfectly safe, disappear without leaving any trace, and then return quickly when they are thought to be far away.

In European warfare, no matter how promptly an army marches, it cannot move without the fact being known. The mass of baggage fatally hinders speed and always indicates the road which has been taken. A party of Arabs, on the contrary, leaves no more indications of its whereabouts than a flying bird. These wandering horsemen come and go around us with the speed of a swallow.

When they attack, they can almost always be conquered, and are beaten notwithstanding their courage. But it is almost impossible to pursue them; they can never be caught when they are fleeing, therefore they take care to avoid encounters, and, as a rule, they are satisfied to harass our troops. They charge with impetuosity, galloping furiously on their thin horses, rushing forward like a storm of floating garments and dust.

Still galloping, they discharge their long guns, and then, suddenly describing a sharp curve, they tear away at full speed just as they came, leaving here and there on the ground behind them a white bundle which flutters like a wounded bird with blood on its wings.



## THE PROVINCE OF ALGERIA



ALGERIANS, the true inhabitants of Algeria, know hardly anything of their country outside of the plain of the Mitidja. They live quietly in one of the most charming cities of the world, declaring that the Arab is ungovernable and good only to kill or to cast away in the desert.

Of the Arabs they have seen only the vermin of the south which swarm in their streets. In the cafés they speak of Laghouat, of Bou-Saada or of Saida as though these places were at the very end of the world. It is even rather uncommon to find an officer who knows all three provinces. He usually stays in the same district until it is time for him to return to France.

It is only fair to add that it is becoming very difficult to travel as soon as one ventures beyond the roads known in the south. It can be done only with the support of the military authorities. The commanding officers consider themselves as all-powerful monarchs; and no stranger could venture on their lands without running very great risks from the Arabs. Any solitary person would immediately be arrested by the chiefs, taken under escort to the



nearest officer, and brought back between two spahis to the territory under civil government.

But if one can show the slightest recommendations, one meets with the kindest treatment from the officers in charge. Living alone, so far from any neighbors, they receive the traveler in the most charming manner; being by themselves, they read a great deal, are well educated, and talk intelligently and with great pleasure; the solitude of this great desolate land with its boundless horizons has taught them how to think as do all solitary workers. I left France with the usual prejudice which exists against these men. I returned with greatly changed ideas.

It is thanks to several of these officers that I was able to take a long excursion beyond the beaten paths of travel, going from tribe to tribe.

The Ramadan had just begun. Everybody in the colony was anxious, for they feared a general uprising at the end of this Mahometan Lent.

The Ramadan lasts thirty days. During this time no true servant of Mahomet should drink, eat or smoke from the earliest morning hours when the sun appears until the time when the eye can no longer distinguish a thread of white from a thread of red. This harsh rule is not followed absolutely literally, and many a cigarette glows as soon as the fiery ball has disappeared behind the horizon, and before the eye has ceased to distinguish red from white.

With the exception of this haste to smoke, no Arab transgresses the severe law about fasting and absolute abstinence. Men, women, boys from fifteen on, girls as soon as they are marriageable, that is to say between eleven and thirteen, remain all

day without eating or drinking. It is not so hard to go without eating, but to abstain from drinking during this terrible heat is fearful. During this Lent there are no dispensations. No one would dare to ask for one. The public women themselves, the Oulad-Naïl, who swarm in all Arabian centers and in the great oases, fast just as the chiefs, perhaps even more. And those of the Arabs whom we thought civilized, who ordinarily show themselves disposed to accept our customs, to share our ideas, to second our actions, become suddenly, as soon as the Ramadan begins, savagely fanatical and stupidly fervent.

It is easy to understand what furious exaltation will result, for these narrow and obstinate minds, from this strict religious practice. All day long these poor unfortunates meditate on an empty stomach, seeing their conquerors eat, drink, and smoke before them. And they repeat to themselves that if they kill one of these *roumis* during the Ramadan, they will go straight to heaven, that the period of our rule is drawing to an end, for their chiefs continually promise them that they are going to drive us into the sea with their guns.

It is especially during the Ramadan that flourish the Aïssaouas, scorpion-eaters, snake-swallowers, religious fakirs, the only ones perhaps, with a few miscreants and some nobles, who have no fanatical faith.

These exceptions are extremely rare; I can only mention one.

An officer from Boghar was starting for a twenty days' march into the south. He asked the three spahis who were accompanying him not to observe the Ramadan, figuring that he could not obtain

much from men worn out from hunger. Two of the soldiers refused, the third answered: "Lieutenant, I do not observe the Ramadan. I am not a marabout, I am noble."

He was, indeed, from a big tent, a son of one of the oldest and most illustrious families of the desert.

A strange custom exists which dates from the time of our occupation and which seems most grotesque when one thinks of the serious results which the Ramadan can have for us. As we wished, at the beginning, to be at peace with the conquered ones, and as flattering their religion is the best way to take them, it was decided that the French cannon would give the signal for abstinence during the sacred period. Therefore, in the morning, at the first pale streaks of dawn, a cannon orders the fast to begin; and each evening, about twenty minutes after sunset, from all the towns, from every fort or military post, a cannon goes off, which causes thousands of cigarettes to light up, as many throats to drink, while throughout Algeria countless dishes of *kous-kous* are being prepared. I was able, in the great mosque at Algiers, to observe the religious ceremony which opens the Ramadan.

The building is very plain, with its whitewashed walls and carpet-covered floor. The Arabs enter quickly, barefooted, with their shoes in their hands. They place themselves in regular lines, widely separated from each other and more even than those of soldiers at manœuvres. They place their shoes on the floor before them with whatever small objects they may have had in their hands; and they stand there as motionless as statues, facing toward a little chapel, which indicates the direction of the Mecca.

In this chapel the mufti officiates. In his old,

low, cackling and monotonous voice he cries a kind of sorrowful chant, which, once heard, is never to be forgotten. The intonation often changes, and then all the listeners with a single, rhythmic, silent, and rapid movement fall with their heads against the ground, remain prostrate for a few seconds, and then arise without having made the slightest noise and without, for an instant, interrupting the shaky little chant of the mufti. And these people are continually falling and arising with a fantastical promptness, silence, and regularity. The scraping of chairs, coughing, and whispering of Catholic churches is not to be heard here. One feels that a savage faith fills these people, bends them, and straightens them out like puppets; it is a silent and tyrannical faith which takes hold of their bodies, makes their faces immovable, and wrings their hearts. An indefinable sentiment of respect mingled with pity comes over one at the sight of these lean fanatics, who have no superfluous flesh to hinder their prostrations and who are religious with the mechanical regularity of Prussian soldiers at drill.

The walls are white, the rugs on the floor are red. The men are dressed in white, red, blue, or in any other color which may suit their fancy, but all are gracefully draped and carry themselves proudly. On their head and shoulders falls a soft light from the lusters.

A family of marabouts occupies a platform and chants the answers with the same intonation used by the mufti. This continues indefinitely.

It is during the evenings of the Ramadan that one should visit the Casbah. This name "Casbah," which means fortress, has been applied to the whole Arabian section of the town. Since the inhabitants

fast and sleep during the daytime, they eat and live during the night. Then these little streets, steep as a mountain path, muddy, narrow, turning, twisting, crossing and recrossing, and so mysterious-looking that unconsciously one speaks in hushed tones, then are they filled with a population which seems to have sprung from the "Arabian Nights." That is the exact impression which they give one. One takes a trip into this land told of by the Sultana Schéhérazade. Here we find in the low doorways, thick as prison walls and with wonderfully strong fastening, the veiled women; here also in the depths of courtyards are faces barely seen and vague noises coming from these houses, as tightly closed as secret coffers. In the doorways we often find men stretched out, eating and drinking. Sometimes these groups take up a whole narrow passage. One must step over bare legs and look for a place to put one's foot in the midst of a bundle of white cloth stretched out on the ground, and from which head, legs, and arms extend.

The Jews open the little dens which they use as shops, and the clandestine houses of pleasure are so numerous that one can hardly walk five minutes without seeing two or three.

In the Arabian cafés crowds of men stand huddled, one against the other, sitting on the bench which runs around the wall, or simply squatting on the ground, drink coffee from tiny little cups. They stay there motionless and silent, holding in their hands the cups which they occasionally carry to their mouths with a slow, languid movement. Twenty of them stand in a space where we would feel crowded if there were ten of us.

Calm-looking fanatics come and go amid these

quiet drinkers, preaching revolt and announcing the end of servitude.

It is, so they say, in the *ksar* (Arabian village) of Boukhrari that the first symptoms of great insurrections are to be felt. This village is on the road to Laghouat. Let us go there.

As one looks up at the Atlas Mountains from the immense plain of the Mitidja one sees a gigantic rift which cuts the mountain in a southerly direction. It is as though it had been slit open with an axe. This fissure is called the gorge of the Chiffa. It is through here that passes the road to Médéah, to Boukhrari and to Laghouat. We enter the gap in the mountain, follow the small stream, the Chiffa, and go along the narrow, wild, and wooded gorge. Everywhere we find springs. The trees grow on this upright wall, clinging to anything, and look as though they were scaling the rock.

The passage grows still narrower. The steep rocks threaten us; the sky looks like a narrow blue ribbon between the high peaks; then suddenly, around a sharp curve, appears a little inn at the beginning of a wooded ravine. This is the Ruisseau des Singes Inn.

Before the door the water babbles in a brook; it bubbles and trickles and fills this nook with green and freshness which makes one think of the calm valleys of Switzerland. We rest and doze in the shade; but suddenly over our heads a branch moves; we sit up—then through the thick foliage we see a hurried flight of monkeys, bounding, falling, and jumping with shrill cries. There are big and small ones, hundreds, perhaps thousands of them. The woods are full, peopled, swarming with them. A few, captured by the inn-keepers, are tamed and



quieted. As soon as we are quiet, they come up, watch, and observe us. One might think that the traveler is the great distraction for the inhabitants of this valley. There are times, however, when one does not see a single one.

After the inn of the Ruisseau des Singes the valley once more narrows down; and, suddenly, to the left, we see, springing almost from the very top of the mountain, two cascades of pure, limpid water, two silver ribbons. If you only knew how sweet it is to see these cascades in this land of Africa! We climb for a long time. The gorge becomes less deep and less wooded. As we ascend, the mountain becomes more and more barren. We pass through fields, and when we reach the summit we find oaks, elms and willows, the trees of our own country. We sleep at Médéah, a little white city very similar to many of our French towns.

It is after Médéah that the fierce ravages of the sun begin again. Nevertheless we cross a forest, but a poor, thin forest, showing the burned trees and parched earth. After that there is no living creature near us.

To my left opens out the little valley, arid and red, without a single blade of grass; it stretches out in the distance like a trough of sand. Suddenly a great shadow slowly passes over it, gliding from one end to the other like a dark stain on the barren land. This is the real, the only inhabitant of this mournful and deserted land. It seems to reign here like a mysterious evil spirit. I raise my eyes and I see him moving away with motionless, outstretched wings, the great scavenger, the lean vulture soaring over his domain beneath this other master, who is killing this vast country—the Sun, the vast Sun.



When we descend toward Boukhrari, we discern as far as the eye can see the endless valley of the Chélif. It is there in all its hideousness, in the yellow misery of the soil. It appears ragged, like an old Arab, crossed by the bed of a stream without water, drained to the mud by the heat from the heavens. This time the fire, which replaces the air and fills the atmosphere, has conquered, devoured, pulverized, destroyed everything.

Something sweeps your brow; in another place it would be a breeze, here it is fire. Something seems to be floating over the rocky peaks; it might be mist, but it is fire, or rather visible heat. If the earth were not already charred through, this strange haze would remind one of the smoke which rises from flesh burned with a red-hot iron. And all this has a peculiar color, blinding and yet soft, the color of hot sand which seems tinged with a faint violet fallen from the melting sky.

There are no insects in this land of dust, only a few large ants. The thousands of little creatures which we see in our land could not exist in this furnace. On certain scorching days the flies themselves die, just as they do with us when a cold wave comes. It is only with difficulty that one can raise chickens. We see the poor creatures hop around with open beaks and flapping wings in a pitiful yet comical manner.

For three years the springs have been drying up, and the all-powerful Sun seems to glory in its great victory.

However, we see a few trees. This is Boghar, at the top of a dusty mountain.

To the left, in a rocky crevice crowning a hill and hardly distinguishable from the soil, so monot-

onous is the color, a large village stands out against the sky, it is the *ksar* of Boukhrari.

At the foot of this dusky hill which supports this vast Arabian village, are a few houses hidden in a fold; they are inhabited by a mixed community.

The *ksar* of Boukhrari is one of the largest Arabian villages in Algeria. It is right on the southern frontier, a little beyond the Tell, in the zone of transition between the civilized country and the Great Desert. Its situation gives to it a peculiar political importance, for it makes a sort of bond between the Arabs from the coast and those from the Sahara. Therefore it has always been the pulse of revolts. It is here that comes the given order, and from here that the command is given out. The most distant tribes send their envoys to find out what is happening in Boukhrari. The eyes of all Algeria are fixed on this spot. Alone the French administration pays no attention to what happens here. It is administered like a typical French town, by a mayor, some sleepy-eyed peasant, with a forester as assistant. There is no check on who comes or goes. The Arabs coming from everywhere can go around, talk, conspire to their heart's content without being disturbed in the slightest.

At the foot of the *ksar*, two or three hundred yards away, is the mixed community, governed by a civilian, whose power is unlimited over a vast expanse of barren land, which is not worth while watching. But he cannot infringe on the duties of his neighbor, the mayor.

Opposite, on the mountain, is Boghar, where dwells the commanding officer of the military district. He has in his hands the fullest powers and means of action, but he can do nothing in the *ksar*,

which is ruled by its own mayor. Now, the *ksar* is only inhabited by Arabs. It is the dangerous spot which is overlooked, while the neighboring places are carefully watched. The administration seeks to remedy the effect and not the cause.

What is the result? The military and civil rulers, when they agree, organize a kind of secret police and try to get information through spies.

Is it not surprising to see this Arabian center, recognized as dangerous by every one, freer than a French town, whereas it would be impossible for any Frenchman whatsoever, unless he be recommended by some influential person, to penetrate into the southern military districts?

In the mixed community there is an inn. I spent a sweltering night there. The air seemed still to be burning from the last flare of daylight. It was stifling. I arose at early dawn. The sun appeared, eager for its incendiary work. Before my window, which looked out on the horizon, already torrid, stood a little stage-coach. On the yellow panels stood the words: "Southern Mail!"

Southern Mail! Therefore one could still go farther south in this terrible month of August. The South! What a rapid, burning word! The South! Fire! Over there to the north, in speaking of temperate countries we say: "The Midi." Here it is: "The South."

I looked at this short syllable, as surprised as though I had never seen it before. It seemed to me as though I were discovering its hidden meaning. For the best known words, like the faces which we often see, have secret meanings which strike us all of a sudden, we know not why.

The South! The desert, the nomads, the unex-

plored lands, and then the negroes! This is a whole new world, something like the beginning of a universe! The South! What strength seems to lie behind that word when one is on the edge of the Sahara!

During the afternoon I took a look at the *ksar*. Boukhrari is the first village where one meets the Oulad-Nail. One is astounded at the appearance of these desert courtesans.

The crowded streets are full of Arabs lying in the doorways, whispering or sleeping. Everywhere their fluttering white garments seem to increase the uniform whiteness of the houses. There are no spots; everything is white; and suddenly a woman appears, standing in a doorway, with a large head-dress, which seems of Assyrian origin, surmounted by a golden diadem. She wears a long, bright red robe. Her arms and ankles are encircled with sparkling bracelets, and her regular features are tattooed with blue stars.

Then we see more, many more, with the same monumental headdress. It looks like a square mountain with a thick braid falling to the lower tip of her ear, then caught up again behind, and losing itself again in the opaque mass of hair. They always wear diadems, some of which are very costly. The breast is completely covered under necklaces, medals, heavy jewelry; and a curiously engraved silvered padlock hangs down from two strong chains of the same metal, at one end of which hangs the key which fits the lock.

Some of these girls only wear small bracelets. They are beginners. The others, the older ones, sometimes wear jewelry amounting to ten or fifteen thousand francs. I saw one with a necklace formed

of eight rows of twenty-franc pieces. It is thus that they keep their hard-earned savings. The rings on their ankles are of massive silver and surprisingly heavy. Indeed, as soon as they can save up two or three hundred francs in silver, they carry it to a native jeweler and have him melt and make it into chased ankle rings, symbolical padlocks, chains, or heavy bracelets. The tiaras which they wear are obtained in the same manner.

Their monumental headdress, a clever and complicated tangle of braids, requires almost a whole day to put it up and consumes an incredible quantity of oil. Therefore they do not have their hair dressed more than once a month, and they take great care not to disturb this edifice, which soon spreads an intolerable odor.

The best time to see them is in the evening, when they dance in a Moorish café.

The village is silent. White forms lie along the walls of the houses. The hot sky is studded with stars, and these African stars shine with a brilliancy which I had never imagined—the sparkling of a diamond, throbbing, living, flashing.

Suddenly, as we turn a corner a noise attracts us, a wild, savage music, a rumble of kettledrums, drowned by the shrill, continuous, deafening, and wild sound of a flute, which is played by a big black negro, the proprietor of the place.

Before the door is a heap of burnous, a bundle of Arabs, who look on without entering, and which looks like a moving light in the brightness which comes from the interior. Inside, rows of motionless creatures in white are seated on boards along the walls, beneath a very low roof. On the ground, crouching, with their gaudy raiments, their flashing

jewelry, their tattooed faces and their high head-dress, which remind us of Egyptian bas-reliefs, the Oulad-Nail are waiting.

We enter. No one moves. Then, according to the custom, we seize a few Arabs, and, pulling them away from their places, we sit down; they walk away with impassive faces. Others crowd up and make room for them.

On a platform in the rear of the establishment, four men in ecstatic poses are frantically beating the stretched skins of four tambourines, while the proprietor, a tall negro, walks about with a majestic tread, blowing furiously on his maddening flute, without stopping for a single second.

Then two Oulad-Nails stand up and take their places at the two extremities of a space left vacant between two benches, and they begin to dance. Their dance is a slow march, emphasized by a tap of the heel which shakes all the ankle rings. At each one of these taps the whole body bends in a kind of methodical limp; the hands are held to the height of the eyes and are turned about slowly at each movement with a brisk snapping of the fingers. The face, turned a little to the side, is rigid, impassive, and astonishingly motionless, the expression of a sphinx, while the eyes follow the motions of the hands, as though fascinated by the slow movements of these members.

Thus the dancers approach each other. When they meet, their hands touch; they seem to tremble; they bend backward, letting a long veil, which falls from their head to their feet, trail behind them.

Again they meet and gracefully sway to and fro, like two loving doves. The long veil floats behind them like wings. Suddenly they straighten out



again, once more impassive; they part, and each one continues her slow and limping glide as far as the line of spectators.

Not all of them are pretty; but all possess a peculiar charm. Nothing can give a correct idea of these crouching Arabs, among whom calmly pass these girls, covered with gold and flashing raiments.

Sometimes they change their dance a little bit. These courtesans originally came from only one tribe, the tribe of the Oulad-Nail. They used to amass their dowries in this manner and then return home to get married. They were held in no less high esteem by their tribe. It was the custom. Nowadays, although it is still admissible for the daughters of the Oulad-Nail to leave home and make a fortune in this manner, all the tribes furnish courtesans to the Arabian centers.

The proprietor of the café where they show themselves is always a negro. As soon as he perceives strangers he pastes a silver five-franc piece to his forehead, which stays glued to the skin, no one knows how. Then he walks around his establishment, furiously blowing on his maddening flute, persistently pointing to the money which he has stuck to himself in order to induce the visitor to offer him as much.

Those of the Oulad-Nails who are of noble birth show great generosity and delicacy in their dealings with strangers. If the lover of a minute admires for a second the thick rug which serves as a bed for this noble trafficker, her servant carries it to him as soon as he has reached his lodgings.

As with girls of France, there are men who live from the produce of their work. Sometimes one of them is found at the bottom of a ravine, with her



throat cut and robbed of all her jewels. Some man whom she loved has disappeared, and is never heard of again.

The place where they receive men is a narrow room with clay walls. In the oases the roof is simply made of weeds packed tightly, one on top of the other, wherein hides a whole army of scorpions. Rugs spread one over the other make the couch.

Rich Arabian or French people who wish to spend a night in luxurious orgies rent until day-break a Moorish bath with all its servants. There they eat and drink and carouse.

This question of morals brings me to a very delicate subject.

Our ideas, our customs, and instincts differ so completely from those which we meet in this country that one hardly dares speak at home of a vice which is so frequent here that European people are no longer even shocked at it. One even laughs at it, instead of growing indignant. It is a very delicate matter, but one which cannot be passed over if one wishes to give an accurate idea of the life and character of the Arabian people.

Here one meets at every step these cases of unnatural love between beings of the same sex, which were recommended by Socrates, the "friend" of Alcibiades. Often, in history, we find cases of this strange and unwholesome passion to which Cæsar abandoned himself, which the Romans and the Greeks constantly practised, which Henry III brought into style in France, and of which many great men have been suspected. But these examples are the exceptions, the more remarkable because they are rare. In Africa this abnormal love has entered so completely into the customs that the

Arabs seem to look upon it as being just as natural as the normal kind.

Whence comes this unnatural instinct? Doubtless from many causes. The most evident is the preponderance of men over women. Perhaps also it may be caused by the excessive climate, which excites the senses. Perhaps it is a vicious heredity inherited by this people from their immoral ancestors of biblical times.

I do not dare to cite some recent examples which were given me of the strength of this lawless passion. There are yet other customs, widespread, but so base that I cannot mention them here.

One night, at about sunset, as I was coming down from Boukhrari, I saw three Oulad-Nails, two in red and one in blue, standing in the midst of a crowd of men, all sitting cross-legged or lying down. These women looked like savage divinities dominating a prostrate people.

The eyes of all were fixed on the fort at Boghar, over on the other side of the dusty valley on the side of the big hill. All were motionless, attentive, as though expecting some wonderful event to happen. Every one held an unlighted cigarette between his fingers.

Suddenly from the fortress came a puff of white smoke; immediately all the cigarettes were lighted, while the ground shook with a muffled and distant roar. It was the French cannon announcing to the conquered that their daily fast was over.



### THE ZAR'EZ



NE morning as I was breakfasting at the fort of Boghar, with the captain of the Arabian post, who, according to competent authorities, is one of the most obliging and capable officers in the southern service, the conversation turned to a mission which had been intrusted to two young lieutenants. They were to take a long trip through the territories of Boghar, Djelfa, and Bou Saida in order to locate water. There was still fear of a general insurrection after the Ramadan, and it had been decided to send an expedition to the tribes which inhabit this part of the land.

As yet, no accurate map of this country exists. There are only a few topographical reliefs made by a few officers, who occasionally pass through here, approximate indication of springs and wells, notes scribbled hastily on the pommel of a

saddle, rough sketches made without any kind of an instrument.

I immediately asked for permission to join the little troop. It was granted me in the most gracious manner possible.

We left two days later. It was three o'clock in the morning when a spahi knocked at the door of the miserable little inn at Boukhrari and woke me up. I opened the door for the man. He stood there in his black-braided red jacket, his wide, plaited pantaloons, which stopped at the knee and were tucked into the leather gaiters worn by desert riders. He was a medium-sized Arab. His hooked nose had been slit open by a saber, and the scar exposed the left nostril. His name was Bou-Abdallah. He said:

"Your horse is ready, *mossieu*."

"Has the Lieutenant arrived?" I asked.

"He is coming," he answered.

Soon a distant noise could be heard in the dark and barren valley; then shadows appeared and passed on. I could only distinguish the strange and clumsy bodies of the three camels which were carrying the canteens, our cots, and what few objects we were taking with us for a twenty days' journey into a wilderness almost unknown to the officers themselves.

In a short time, coming from the direction of the fort at Boghar I heard the rapid galloping of a company of horsemen, and the two lieutenants who were to lead the expedition appeared with their escort, composed of another spahi and an Arabian horseman named Dellis, a man of noble birth from an illustrious native family.

I immediately mounted, and we started. The night was still absolutely dark, calm, one might al-

most say motionless. For a while we went to the north, following the valley of the Chélif; we turned to the right into a valley just as day was breaking.

In this country dawn and dusk do not exist. One hardly ever sees those long-drawn-out crimson clouds, sharply defined, brilliant with the blazing blood-red horizon of our northern skies, as the sun rises or sets.

Here there is at first a very faint light, which grows, stretches, and fills the whole atmosphere in a few seconds. Then suddenly, at the crest of the mountain, or at the edge of a boundless plain, the sun appears in all its strength, without the reddish, sleepy look which it has in our foggy land.

The strangest thing about these desert dawns is the silence. Who, at home, does not know the first chirping of the bird long before daylight, as soon as the first pale streaks appear in the sky, and this answering cry from the neighboring tree; finally this incessant chatter of whistling, trilling, and sharp notes, together with the distant crowing of cocks; all this clamor of the awakening of the beasts, all these cheerful voices coming through the foliage?

Here, not a sound. The enormous sun rises over this land which it has devastated, and it already seems to look down at it like a master, as though to make sure that no living thing remains. No cry is ever heard, except occasionally the neighing of a horse; not a sign of life is to be seen except when one has camped in the neighborhood of a spring, to which some silent herd slowly marches up to drink.

The heat immediately becomes scorching; we put on over the flannel hood and the white cap the enormous *nédol*, a straw hat with a very wide brim.

We follow along the valley slowly. As far as we could see everything was bare, of a grayish yellow, burning and superb. At times, in a little hollow or in a dried-up river bed, in some stagnant water, a few green reeds made a pleasing green spot; in a fold in the mountain, two or three trees indicated a spring. We were not yet in that country which we were soon to cross, where thirst could not be quenched.

We were still climbing. Small valleys led into ours, and as noon approached the horizon almost disappeared in a faint haze of heat, which blended the distance into tones of faint blues and pinks, which appeared to be almost white, but which were nevertheless slightly colored and which had a softness and exquisite charm when compared with the immediate surroundings.

At last we reached the top of the mountain, and El-Akhedar-ben-Yahia, the chief with whom we were to camp, came to meet us, followed by a few horsemen. He was an Arab from an illustrious family, the son of the Bach'agha Yahia-ben-Aïssa, nicknamed "Bach'agha with the wooden leg." He led us to the camp, which was near a spring, under four giant trees, whose roots were continually bathed by the water, the only green thing to be seen along the horizon of barren, stony peaks which stretched around as far as the eye could reach. Luncheon was immediately served. The chief could not join us on account of the Ramadan, but he sat down opposite us in order to see that we lacked nothing; beside him sat his brother El-Haoués-ben-Yahia, chief of the Oulad-Alane-Berchieh. Then appeared a child of about twelve, frail, but with a noble appearance and infinite charm. I had already

noticed him a few days before amidst the Oulad-Nails in the Moorish café in Boukhrari.

I had been struck by the fineness and dazzling whiteness of the garments of this frail little Arab, with his noble appearance, with the respect with which every one seemed to treat him. When I had expressed surprise at seeing him at such a tender age frequenting courtesans, I was told: "He is the youngest son of the Bach-agma. He is coming here to see life and know the women!" How different from our French customs!

The child recognized me and came forward gravely, holding out his hands. Then, as his tender age excused him from the Ramadan, he sat down beside us, and, with his thin, slender fingers, he began to tear apart the roast mutton. I thought I understood his big brothers, the two chiefs, who appeared to be about forty, teasing him about his trip to town, asking him where he had obtained that silk scarf which he was wearing around his neck, and whether it was the gift of some woman.

That day we were able to take our siesta in the shade of the trees. I awoke as night was falling, and I climbed a neighboring hill in order to get a full view of the horizon. The sun, ready to disappear, was tinged with red in an orange sky. Everywhere, to the north and to the south, to the east and to the west, as far as the eye could see, rows of mountains stood out before me, pink, like the wings of a flamingo. One might have thought it the fairy-like apotheosis of some opera, with surprising and unbelievable colors, something fictitious, forced, unnatural, and yet withal strangely beautiful.

The following day we descended into the plain on the other side of the mountain, a plain of such in-



finite size that it took us three days to cross it, notwithstanding the fact that we could see the chain of the Djebel-Gada Mountains opposite us. Here was a mournful stretch of sand, or rather of dust, sometimes relieved by a patch of alfalfa which forced our horses to zigzag as they went.

These African plains are surprising. They seem as flat and bare as a floor, when, on the contrary, they are continually crossed by undulations, like the sea after a storm, which, from a distance, seems perfectly calm, because the surface is smooth, but which only moves with a long, slow swell. The slopes on these land ways are insensible; one never loses sight of the mountains at the horizon, but just the same a whole army could hide in some parallel groove a mile away.

It is just this fact which makes the pursuit of Bou-Amama so difficult on these highlands of Southern Oran.

Every morning, at daybreak, we set out across these endless and mournful stretches; every evening, we see a few white-clad horsemen come toward us and lead us to a patched tent, under which are spread out some rugs. Every day we eat the same things, we talk a little, then we sleep, or dream.

How far away from the world we feel, far from life, far from everything, under this low tent, through the holes of which we can see the stars, and through whose open flaps we can observe the immense, barren land of sand!

This land is always monotonous, always the same, charred and dried; and yet one wishes for nothing here, one hopes for nothing. This calm landscape with its dazzling light suffices to the eye,

to the mind, to the senses, and to dreams, because it is complete, *absolute*, and because one could not conceive of its being otherwise. The sight of the thin verdure even offends as something false or out of place.

Every day one sees the same thing: fire devouring the world, and as soon as the sun has set, the moon, in turn, rises over this infinite solitude. But every day the silent desert, little by little, fills one's mind and penetrates the thoughts just as the blinding light parches the skin; and one would like to become a nomad like these men, who change their country without ever changing their fatherland, in the midst of these boundless spaces, always more or less alike.

Each day the officer on duty sends ahead a native horseman to tell the chief with whom we expect to eat and sleep the following day that we are coming, in order that he may procure the necessary food for man and beast. This custom, which is equivalent to billeting in France, becomes very burdensome for the tribes, from the way it is practised.

Who says Arab says thief, without any exception. This is what occurs. The chief addresses himself to one of the leaders and claims the supplies from his men. In order to get rid of this burden the leader pays the chief. The latter pockets the money and applies to another, who often does the same thing. Some one, however, has got to procure the supplies. If the chief has an enemy the duty falls to him; and he, in turn, treats the simple Arabs the way the chief treats the leaders.

This is how a tax which should cost twenty or thirty francs for a tribe invariably amounts to four or five hundred. And it is impossible to change this

state of affairs, for reasons too lengthy to go into here.

As soon as we approach a camp we see in the distance a group of horsemen coming toward us. One of them stays in the lead, alone; the horses walk or trot. Then, suddenly they break into a furious gallop, such as our northern animals could not endure for two minutes. It is the gallop of race horses, which resembles the passing of an express train. But the Arab remains perfectly erect on his saddle, with his white garments floating behind him; and with one jerk he stops the animal, which bends under the shock. Then he jumps to the ground and advances respectfully to the officer, whose hand he kisses. No matter what may be the title, position, power or fortune of the Arab, he almost invariably kisses the hand of any officer whom he happens to meet.

Then the chief remounts and directs the travelers to the tent which has been prepared for them. One usually imagines that Arabian tents are white and brilliant in the sunlight, whereas, on the contrary, they are of a dirty brown striped with yellow. The heavy material used for them is made of heavy, coarse hair from camels or goats. The tent is very low (just high enough to stand up in) and broad. Irregularly placed stakes support it, and all the flaps are raised, in order to permit of a free circulation of air.

Notwithstanding this precaution, the days are intolerable in these canvas dwellings; but the nights are delightful, and one can sleep wonderfully well on the magnificent, thick rugs of the Djebel-Amour, even though they be full of insects.

Rugs constitute the only luxury of wealthy

Arabs. They are piled one on top of the other in a big heap, and they are considered so precious that every man takes off his shoes before stepping on them, just as at the door of a mosque.

As soon as his guests are seated, or, rather, stretched out, on the ground, the chief orders coffee. This coffee is exquisite. The recipe for making it is simple. The bean is crushed, instead of ground, and with it is mixed a certain amount of ambergris, then it is boiled in water.

There is nothing more comical than Arabian china. When a rich chief entertains, his tent is decorated with priceless hangings, beautiful cushions, and marvelous rugs; then the coffee is brought in on an old tin tray, with a few hideous, nicked, and cracked cups, which look as though they might have been purchased at some cheap bazaar in Paris. They are of every size and shape, English porcelain, imitation Japanese, ordinary china, and the ugliest specimens of ordinary thick crockery to be found anywhere. The coffee itself is brought in a cracked pitcher, in a soldier's mess tin, or in a wonderful tin coffee-pot, dented, worn, and shapeless.

This is indeed a strange people, childish and primitive as at the beginning of time. They pass on the earth without attaching themselves to it, without settling down. They live in dwellings made of cloth stretched over a few sticks, and they possess none of the objects without which life to us would seem unbearable. They have no beds, sheets, tables, chairs, not one of these indispensable little things which bring a little comfort into life. They have no furniture, no trade, no art, no knowledge. They hardly know how to sew together goat-skins in order to carry water, and they always make use

of such rough and primitive methods that one remains astounded.

They cannot even mend their tents if the winds tear them; and in the brown linen are numerous holes, through which the rain comes at all times. These wandering horsemen seem neither to be attached to the earth nor to life; they leave a large stone where lie their dead, any stone picked up on the neighboring mountain. Their cemeteries look like a field where some European house might have crumbled to pieces.

Negroes live in cabins, Laplanders in holes, Esquimaux in huts, the wildest of the savages have some kind of a home on or below the ground; they are attached to mother earth. The Arabs pass along, always wandering, without any tenderness for this earth, which we love with all the power of our human hearts; they gallop over it on their horses, unskilled in all our works, indifferent to all our cares, as though they were always going to some place where they can never arrive.

Their customs have remained primitive. Our civilization glides over them without affecting them in the slightest.

They themselves drink out of the goat-skins; but to strangers they offer water in the most extraordinary receptacles. They use everything, from the iron kettle to the tin can with a hole in it. If, in some raid, they were to come across one of our Parisian silk hats, they would undoubtedly save it and offer water out of it to the first general passing through their tribe.

Their cooking consists of four or five dishes. The order in which they are served never varies. First comes a mutton, which has been roasted over

a fire in the open air. A man brings it in whole, carrying it over his shoulder on a pole, which had served as spit, and the silhouette of the skinned beast hanging in the air reminds one of an execution during the Middle Ages. At night it stands out against the red sky in a sinister and grotesque manner, as it is held there by a severe-looking, white-clad person.

This mutton is placed in a flat basket made of braided alfalfa, and set in the center of the group of people sitting around in a circle, after the Turkish fashion. A fork is unknown; everybody uses his fingers or a queer little bone-handled knife. The crisp skin is considered the daintiest part. It is torn off in long strips, and one crunches it, either while drinking muddy water, or camel's milk diluted with water, or sour milk, which has fermented in goat skins, and thus taken on an odor of musk. The Arabs call this drink *leben*.

After the *entr  e* a kind of paste like vermicelli is brought in, sometimes in a washbowl, sometimes in an antique kettle. The gravy of this dish is composed of a yellowish liquid where spices strive for supremacy over red pepper in a mixture of dried apricots and mashed dates. I do not recommend this dish to connoisseurs.

When the chief who receives you wishes to be lavish, the *hamis* is now brought on. This dish is wonderful. I will give the recipe for those who might like to try it.

It is prepared either with chicken or with mutton. The meat is cut into small pieces and fried in butter. Then a light gravy is obtained by moistening it with a little warm water. (I should think that a little weak bouillon prepared in advance



would be much better.) A large amount of red pepper, a trace of spice, black pepper, salt, onions, dates, and dried apricots are added; this mixture is cooked until the apricots and dates are soft, and then it is poured over the meat. It is exquisite!

The meal invariably ends with the *kous-kous* or *kouskoussou*, the national dish. The Arabs prepare the *kous-kous* by making little pellets of flour with their fingers. These little grains are cooked in a peculiar manner and moistened with a special kind of broth. I shall remain silent about these recipes, that I may not be accused of writing a cook-book.

Sometimes little honey cakes are brought on, which are excellent.

Each time you take a drink the chief who is receiving you says: "*Saa!*" ("Your health!"). You must answer: "*Allah y selmeck!*" which is equivalent to our "God bless you!" These formulas are repeated many times during a meal.

Every evening, at about four o'clock, we settle down in some new tent, sometimes at the foot of a mountain, sometimes in an endless plain.

As soon as the news of our arrival has spread through the tribe, we see from all sides, in the distance, in the barren country or on the hills, little white specks, which are approaching. They are the Arabs who are coming to observe the officer and to make known to him their claims and complaints. Almost all of them come on horseback, although some come on foot and a good many on small asses.

As soon as they set foot on the ground, they crouch around the tent, and they sit there motionless, with fixed gaze, waiting. At last the chief motions to them, and the complainants advance.

For every officer administers justice. They bring



forward the most extraordinary claims, for no people is as quarrelsome, wrangling, and vindictive as the Arab. As for knowing the truth and giving a fair decision, that is out of the question. Each side brings an extraordinary number of false witnesses, who swear on the ashes of their fathers and mothers to the truthfulness of the most brazen lies. Here are a few examples:

A *cadi* (the avariciousness of these Mussulman judges is proverbial and well merited) sends for an Arab, and makes the following proposition to him: "You give me twenty-five *douros* and bring me seven witnesses, who will swear in writing, before me, that X—— owes you seventy-five *douros*. I will make him give them to you."

This man brings his witnesses, who swear and sign. Then the judge calls X——, and says to him: "Give me fifty *douros*, and bring me nine witnesses, who will swear that B—— (the first Arab) owes you one hundred and twenty-five *douros*. I will make him give them to you." The second Arab brings his witnesses.

Then the judge orders the first Arab to appear before him, and on the strength of the statement of the seven witnesses, he makes the second one give him seventy-five *douros*. But the second, in turn, proves by his nine witnesses that the first Arab owes him one hundred and twenty-five *douros*. The judge makes him pay them. The share of the judge in this transaction, therefore, amounts to seventy-five *douros* (375 francs), levied on his two victims.

This occurrence is authentic.

Notwithstanding all this, an Arab rarely appeals to a French judge because he cannot be corrupted, while a *cadi* will give any decision for money.

He also has an unsurmountable dislike for our complicated ways of administering justice. Any written document frightens him, for he pushes his superstition about paper to extremes, fearing anything on which can be written the name of God or any malevolent characters.

At the beginning of the French rule, when a Musulman found a scrap of paper, he would religiously carry it to his lips, and then bury it in the ground or hide it in some crack of a rock or tree-trunk. This custom frequently caused such disagreeable surprises that the Mohammedans were soon cured of it.

Here is another example of Arabian rascality:

A murder was committed in a tribe near Boghar. An Arab was suspected, but proofs were lacking. There was in this tribe a poor man, recently arrived from a neighboring tribe, and who had established himself there in order to watch over some pecuniary interests. A witness accuses him of the murder; another follows, and still another. Ninety people come forward with the most precise kind of testimony. The stranger was condemned to death and executed. Later the man's innocence was fully proven. The Arabs had simply wished to rid themselves of a stranger, who was in their way, and to prevent a man from their own tribe being compromised.

Lawsuits last for years without a single ray of truth being gleaned from either side. Then they have recourse to a very simple method; both families, as well as the witnesses, are imprisoned. Then, at the end of a few months, they are freed; as a rule, they remain quiet for about a year after that. Then they begin over again.

In the tribe of the Oulad-Alane, which we

crossed, there is a lawsuit which has been going on for the last three years, in which time not a word of truth has been spoken. From time to time the two litigants spend a short time in jail, and they begin over again as soon as they are freed.

These people spend their lives robbing each other and shooting at each other. But they take great care to hide from us any affair in which powder has played a part.

A man from the tribe of the Oulad-Mokhtar, tall and powerful, asked for admittance to the hospital. The officer in charge questioned him about his sickness. Then the Arab opened his garment and showed us a horrible wound, about at the height of the liver, already old and beginning to mortify. The wounded man was told to turn around, and we saw, right opposite the first hole, another one in the middle of a lump about the size of a child's head. When it was pressed, pieces of bone came out. This man had evidently been shot, and the bullet had penetrated his chest and come out through his back, shattering several ribs. But he energetically denied this, swearing that "it was the work of God."

In this country, however, wounds are not considered very serious. The festering and putrefaction produced by the hatching of microbes does not exist, as these creatures can only live in a moist climate. Unless immediate death results, or unless some vital organ is attacked, wounds always heal.

The next day we arrived at the tent of Chief Abd-el-Kader-bel-Hout, an upstart. The tribe which he governs with wisdom is less wild and quarrelsome than the others. Perhaps we should look for another reason for this relative quiet.

In this part of the country the only springs are

on the south side of the Djebel Gada, which is uninhabited. Naturally the water is only supplied by wells common to the whole tribe. Hence the water cannot be diverted from its course, which action is the usual cause of all quarrels and hatred throughout the south.

After all claims have been settled we try to sleep a little in the intense heat of the tent.

Night comes and we dine. A profound quiet settles over the parched earth. In the distance the dogs begin to howl, and the jackals answer them. We stretch ourselves out on the rugs under the sky, studded with stars, which twinkle so brightly that the atmosphere seems moist; then we talk for a long, long time. All our tender memories return to us, and they seem so easy to tell in these warm, starlit evenings. All around the officers' tent Arabs are stretched on the ground, while in a row in front stand a line of fettered horses, with a man guarding over each one.

These horses must not lie down, and they always stand, for a chief's horse must never be tired. As soon as one of them tries to lie down an Arab rushes forward and makes him get up.

But night is advancing. We stretch ourselves out on the heavy woolen rugs, and at times, when we wake up suddenly, we see all around us on the bare ground white forms, lying around and sleeping, like corpses in a shroud.

One day, after a ten hours' march in the burning dust, just as we had arrived in camp, near a well of muddy, brackish water (which, however, seemed delicious to us), the lieutenant suddenly shook me by the arm as I was getting ready to crawl into my tent, and, pointing toward the south, to the distant

horizon, he said: "Don't you see something over there?"

I looked carefully, and answered: "Yes, a tiny gray cloud."

Then the lieutenant smiled, saying: "Well, just sit there, and keep on watching it."

Surprised, I asked him why. My companion continued: "Unless I am mistaken, it is a sand storm, which is coming our way."

It was now about four o'clock and the temperature under the tent was still over 100 degrees. The air seemed asleep under the intolerable slanting flame of the sun. Not a breath, not a sound, except from our horses munching their barley and the indistinct murmuring of the Arabs, who were preparing our meal, a short distance away.

It seemed, however, as though there were some other heat about us than that from the sky, more concentrating, like that which oppresses one when one is in the neighborhood of a big fire. It was not the burning breath, sharp and oft repeated, the fiery caresses which pronounce and precede the sirocco, but a mysterious heating of all the atoms of everything which exists.

I looked at the cloud, which was rapidly growing, but no different from all others. It was now of a dirty brown, and rose high in space. Then it spread out, just as do our northern storms. In fact, I could see absolutely nothing peculiar about it.

At last it stretched across the whole south. Its base was of a dense black, while its top seemed copper-colored and transparent.

A great commotion behind me made me turn around. The Arabs had closed our tent, and they were weighting the edges down with heavy stones.

Each one was running around, calling and tearing about with this dazed look which one sees on people when a camp is surprised.

The daylight seemed suddenly to be going out; I raised my eyes to the sun. It was covered with a yellow veil, and seemed no longer to be anything but a pale, round spot rapidly disappearing.

Then I saw a surprising sight. The whole horizon to the south had disappeared, and a cloudy mass, which rose to the zenith, was coming toward us, swallowing up objects, continually shortening the limits within sight, drowning everything.

Instinctively I retreated toward the tent. It was high time. The hurricane, like an immense yellow wall, was upon us. It came with the speed of an express train; and suddenly it surrounded us in a furious whirlwind of sand and wind, in a storm of loose, burning, whistling, blinding, and suffocating earth.

Our tent, held down by enormous rocks, was shaken like a sail, but resisted. The one belonging to our spahis, less firmly fastened down, strained and trembled for a few minutes, and then finally was torn up from the ground, and immediately flew away and disappeared into the surrounding night of moving dust and sand.

One could not see ten feet ahead. We inhaled sand, drank sand, ate sand. Our eyes were filled with it, our hair was powdered with it; it filtered down our necks, through our sleeves, and even into our shoes.

This continued all night. A burning thirst was torturing us. But the water, milk, coffee, everything was full of sand, which gritted in our teeth. The roast mutton was peppered with it; the *kous-*



*kous* seemed to be made wholly of fine gravel; the flour was nothing more than powdered rock.

A large scorpion paid us a visit. This weather pleases these creatures, and they all come out of their holes. The neighboring dogs did not howl that night.

In the morning all was over; and the great murdering despot of Africa, the sun, rose superb over a clear horizon.

As this sand storm had disturbed our slumbers, we started out a little later this day.

Before us stretched the chain of Djebel-Cada Mountains, which we had to cross. A pass opened up to the left; we followed along the mountain as far as this passage, and then we entered it. Here once more was the alfalfa, the horrible alfalfa. Suddenly I seemed to discover the trace of a roadway, ruts made by wheels. I stopped, surprised. What a mystery to find a road here! This is the explanation which was given me: An ancient chief of this tribe, wishing to imitate the Europeans living in Algiers, tried to permit himself the luxury of a coach in the desert. But, in order to have a carriage, he needed roads. Therefore this ingenious potentate busied all his Arabian subjects for many months building highways. These poor unfortunates, without picks, shovels, or tools of any kind, digging most of the time with their hands, managed, nevertheless, to level a few miles of road. This was enough for their master, who paraded through the Sahara in a bewildering equipage, accompanied by a native beauty brought from Djelfa by his favorite, a young sixteen-year-old Arab.

One must have seen this country, bare, stripped, denuded, as it is; one must know the Arab with his



imperturbable gravity in order to understand the extreme comedy of this rake, this desert dude driving around with his barefooted sweethearts in a wagon of unpolished wood, with uneven wheels, driven at full speed by his . . . favorite. This tropical elegance, this Saharian debauch, this attempt at style in the middle of Africa, struck me as being extremely ludicrous.

Our troop was rather numerous that morning. Besides the chief and his son, we were accompanied by two native horsemen and by a thin old man with a pointed beard, hooked nose, the expression of a rat, obsequious manners, a crooked spine and deceitful eyes. He was a former chief of the tribe, deposed for extortion. He was to be our guide for the following day, as the road which we were to follow was little frequented, even by Arabs themselves.

However, we finally arrived at the top of the pass. Here a high peak barred our view; but as soon as we had gone around it, I was struck by what was undoubtedly the greatest surprise I had experienced on this trip.

A vast plain stretched out before us, then a lake, an immense lake, shining in the sunlight, the end of which I could not see, lost in the horizon to the left, and whose western extremity was almost opposite to me. A lake in this land, in the middle of the Sahara? A lake which no one had mentioned to me, spoken of by no traveler? Was I mad? I turned to the Lieutenant, asking:

“What lake is this?”

He laughed and answered:

“That is not water, it is salt. The illusion is so perfect that any one can be mistaken. This salt lake is called here the Zar’ez (the Zar’ez-Chergui); it is

from thirty to fifty miles long and about twenty miles broad, according to the spots. These figures are, of course, only approximate, as the country has seldom been crossed and only rapidly, just as we are doing to-day. These salt lakes (there are two of them, the other one farther westward) give their names to the whole country, which is called the Zar'ez. From Bou-Saada on, the plain is called the Hodna, after the salt lake of Msila."

I was looking with wonder at this immense sheet of salt, sparkling under the maddening sun of this land. All this flat, crystallized surface shone like an immense mirror, like a sheet of polished steel. My seared eyes could not stand the reflection from this strange lake, although it was still twenty miles away, a thing which seemed to me almost incredible, as it seems so near.

We were still descending on the other side of the Djebel-Gada, and we were approaching the abandoned fort called Fontaine (Bordj-el-Hammam), where we expected to camp, after an unusually short journey.

The battlements were built at the beginning of the conquest, in order to be able to occupy this deserted country and to leave a garrison with a certain amount of security; the building is now falling in ruins. The surrounding wall, however, is fairly well preserved, and some of the rooms are still habitable.

As on the preceding days, we saw the Arabs file before us until late into the evening; they related to the "officer" infinitely complicated affairs or imaginary griefs, with the sole intention of speaking to the French chief.

A madwoman, come from no one knew where, living no one knew how in these barren solitudes,

roamed around us continually. As soon as we would leave the fort, we would see her, crouching in the most extraordinary positions, hideous, half naked.

Poetically inclined travelers have told much about the respect of the Arabs for the insane. This is how their families respect them . . . they "kill them! Several chiefs, when closely questioned on this subject, admitted it. True, a few of these wretched idiots attain sanctity through their imbecility. Such examples are not confined to Africa alone. The family usually rids itself of the weak-minded, and, as the customs of the tribes are to us as a sealed book, thanks to the system of the great native chiefs, we cannot even find the slightest trace of these disappearances.

As I had only traveled a little during the daytime, I wrote during a part of the night. Toward eleven o'clock I went outside, and stretched my rug in front of the door, intending to sleep in the open air. The full moon was filling the atmosphere with a shimmering light, which seemed to varnish everything that it touched. The mountains, the sand, the horizon already yellow under the sun, seemed still more so under the saffron light of this planet.

In front of me, the vast lake of crystallized salt, the Zar'ez, seemed incandescent. It looked as though some fantastical phosphorescence emanated from it and hovered over it; a luminous, fairy-like mist, something supernatural, soft, and so captivating that for over an hour I stood drinking in this scene, unable to close my eyes. And all around me, shining under the moon's caress, the Arabs, sleeping in their burnouses, looked like huge snowflakes.

We left with the rising sun. The plain leading toward Sebokra sloped gently, and was dotted with

thin tufts of yellow alfalfa. The old, rat-faced Arab took the lead, and we followed rapidly behind. The nearer we got, the more perfect was the illusion of water. Was it possible that that was not a giant lake? To our left it occupied the whole space between two mountains, a stretch of fifteen or twenty miles. We were headed straight for the extremity, as we wished to cross at the narrowest point.

On the other side of the Zar'ez I noticed a sort of hill, or rather hump, of a golden yellow, which seemed to separate it from the mountain. To our left, this line followed the white salt as far as the horizon; and, to our right, where a boundless, barren plain stretched between the two mountains, I distinguished as far as the eye can see this same yellow trail. The lieutenant said to me: "Those are the dunes. This bar of sand is over a hundred miles long and of a varying width. We cross it to-morrow."

The ground became strange, covered with a crust of saltpetre, in which the horses' hoofs sank deep. Grasses and reeds could be seen, and one could feel that water was very near the surface. This plain, inclosed by mountains, absorbing the water from four periodical rivers, and receiving all the furious winter showers, would be an immense swamp if the terrific sun did not dry up the surface. At times, in little hollows, pools of briny water appeared; snipe flew away from us with the rapid motion which is peculiar to them.

At last we found ourselves on the edge of the Sebkra; and we started our journey over this sea of salt. Everything before us was white, of a silvery, snowy, hazy, and glistening white. And even as we

advanced on this crystallized surface, covered with powdered salt like fine snow, and where the horses' hoofs sank in a little, as through thin ice, the impression still remained that all this was water. The only thing which might, at a stretch, indicate to an experienced eye that all this was not liquid was the horizon. Usually the line which separates the water from the sky remains visible, as one is always darker than the other. Sometimes, it is true, everything seems to mingle; then the sea takes on a vague tint of blue, which fades into the pale azure of the infinite vacuum. But no matter how faint the distinction may be, one can always see it by attentive observation. Here one could see nothing. The horizon was entirely veiled in a milky white mist of an indescribable softness. At times one would look out into space for the terrestrial limit; then one would search too low, in the middle of this salty plain, over which floated these strange, creamy vapors.

As long as we remained above the Zar'ez we kept a clear perception of distances and forms; as soon as we were on it all certainty of sight disappeared; we were surrounded by a wealth of mirages.

At times we thought that we distinguished the horizon; suddenly in the middle of this solid lake, which a minute ago had seemed uniform, empty, and flat as a mirror, we saw enormous rocks, strange-looking reeds, islands with steep banks. Then, as we would go forward, these strange visions would disappear, and instead of rocks we would find a few small pebbles; the reeds were no longer anything but dried grass, as high as a finger, astonishingly enlarged by this curious optical effect; the banks of the islands became little irregularities in the salty

crust; and this horizon, which we thought twenty miles away, was hidden a hundred yards from us by the trembling mist which the sun raised from the layer of burning salt.

This lasted for about an hour, then we reached the other shore. At first we found a hollow little plain, covered with a crust of dry clay, with which some saltpetre was still mingled. We went up a low slope; grasses appeared, then reeds, then a little blue flower like a forget-me-not, growing at the end of a long, slender stem, and so fragrant that its perfume filled the whole neighborhood. This exquisite odor gave me the impression of a fresh bath; and we smelt of it for a long time, drinking in its delicious freshness.

At last we came to a road of poplars, a regular forest of reeds, some more trees, then our tents, pitched on the edge of the sand, whose uneven undulations sometimes rose as high as twenty or thirty feet, like sea waves.

The heat was becoming fierce, probably increased by the reflection from the Sebkra. The tents, regular ovens, were unbearable; and as soon as we had dismounted we started to look for shade under the trees. We first had to cross a forest of reeds. I was walking in the lead, and suddenly I began to shout and dance for joy. I had just seen some grape vines, apricot, fig, and pomegranate trees, a whole series of gardens, once prosperous, but now ruined by the sand. These gardens formerly belonged to the chief of Djelfa. No roast mutton for luncheon! What joy! No *kous-kous*! What bliss! Grapes! figs! apricots! All these things were not very ripe. Nevertheless it was a treat from which, I think, we felt some ill effects. The water could have been bet-



ter; it was muddy and full of bugs. We scarcely touched it.

We all plunged into the reeds and went to sleep. A cold sensation woke me up with a start; an immense frog had just spit in my face. One must be very careful in this country and take care not to sleep in the first green spot across which one comes, especially if it is in the neighborhood of the sands, where the *léfaa*, or horned viper, swarms, whose bite is deadly and almost instantaneous. Often the agony does not even last an hour. This reptile is very slow, and only becomes dangerous if he is stepped on, or if one is lying near him. If a person comes across one on his path he can even, with practice and care, take him in the hand by seizing him rapidly behind the ears. I did not permit myself this pastime.

This little and terrible creature lives in the alfalfa, rocks, or any place where it can find shelter. When one sleeps on the ground for the first time, one thinks of nothing else but this reptile, but gradually one thinks no more about it. As for scorpions, they are despised. They are as common there as our spiders with us. Whenever we would see one near our camp we would surround it with a circle of dried grass, to which we would set fire. The crazed beast, knowing itself lost, would lift its tail, bring it around its head in a circle, and sting itself to death. I had been assured that it killed itself, for I always saw it die in the flame.

This is how I saw the horned viper for the first time: One afternoon as we were crossing an immense alfalfa plain, my horse gave signs of uneasiness. He would lower his head, snort, stop, he seemed suspicious of every patch of grass. I am, I



must admit, a very bad horseman, and these sudden stops, besides filling me with doubt as to my stability, would throw me suddenly against the enormous pommel of my saddle. The lieutenant, my companion, laughed heartily. Suddenly my beast made a leap, and began to look down on the ground at something which I could not see, obstinately refusing to advance. Foreseeing a catastrophe, I preferred to dismount, and I looked for the cause of this action. Before me was a little patch of alfalfa. I struck in it at random with my stick, and suddenly a little reptile ran out and disappeared in the neighboring plant. It was a *léfaa*.

The evening of this very day, in a rocky, barren plain, my horse once more began to shy. I jumped to the ground, convinced that I was going to find another *léfaa*. But I saw nothing. Then, as I moved the stone, a big spider, as yellow as the sand, thin, extremely rapid, escaped and disappeared under a rock before I could reach it. A spahi who had joined me called it a "scorpion of the wind," a term meant to express its rapidity. It was, I believe, a tarantula.

One night, while I was sleeping, something icy touched my face. I jumped up with a start; but the sand, the tent, everything was hidden in the darkness. I could distinguish nothing but the big white spots made around me by the sleeping Arabs. Had I been bitten by a *léfaa* which was crawling near me? Was it a scorpion? Whence came this clammy contact with my face? Anxiously I lit a lantern. I looked around ready to strike the animal with my heel, and I saw a monstrous white toad, one of these fantastical toads which one meets in the desert. It was squatting there, puffed up, its feet spread apart,

looking at me. The horrible beast had probably found me in its usual path and had bumped against my face.

As revenge I forced it to smoke a cigarette. He died from it. Here is the method of procedure: his narrow mouth is pried open and a cigarette, rolled very small, is introduced into it and then lighted. The animal chokes and blows in order to get rid of this instrument of torture, and then, willy nilly, it is forced to inhale. Then he blows again, puffed up, expiring and ludicrous; he must continue thus until the end, unless one takes pity on him. He usually dies swollen up like a balloon.

Strangers are often shown a desert sport which consists of pitting a *léfaa* against an *ouran*, a species of lizard. Who of us, while traveling in southern climes, has not met these poor little lizards without a tail crawling along old walls? At first we wonder what is the mystery of these missing tails. Then, one day, as we were reading in the shade of a tree we saw a viper dart from a crack in the wall and spring toward the gentle little lizard, sunning himself on a rock. The lizard tries to escape; the reptile, more rapid, has seized it by its long tail, and half of this organ remains between the sharp teeth of the enemy, while the mutilated little beast disappears in a hole.

Well, the *ouran* is nothing other than the sand crocodile mentioned by Herodotus, a kind of large Sahara lizard, which avenges its race on the terrible *léfaa*.

The battle between these animals is full of interest. It usually takes place in some old soap-box. The lizard is placed in it and begins to run around rapidly, trying to escape; but he becomes motion-

less as soon as the viper is dropped from its bag into the box. Its eye alone moves rapidly. Then he takes a few quick steps as though to slip up to the enemy, and he waits. The *léfaa*, in the meantime, watches the lizard, scenting danger, and prepares for battle; then suddenly it leaps forward, but the other has already jumped aside and is racing around so quickly that it can hardly be seen. He now returns with surprising rapidity and attacks. The *léfaa* has turned around and is holding his jaws open, ready to deliver the fatal sting. But the lizard has already rushed by him and is watching him from the other end of the box.

This lasts fifteen or twenty minutes, sometimes longer. The *léfaa*, exasperated, grows angry and crawls toward the *ouran*, which continually runs away, quicker than the eye, returns, twists, stops, starts, tires out and maddens its fearful adversary. Then suddenly, choosing the right moment, he attacks so quickly that one can only see the viper convulsed and strangled by the strong triangular jaws of the lizard, who has seized him by the neck, right behind the ears, just where the Arabs do.

On seeing this battle of these two creatures in the bottom of a soap-box one thinks of the Spanish bullfights in the imposing arenas. It would be much more dangerous to disturb these tiny reptiles than to face the noisy anger of the horned beasts of the ring.

In the Sahara one often sees a horrible-looking snake, sometimes over a yard long and not much thicker than the little finger. In the neighborhood of Bou-Saada this harmless reptile inspires the Arabs with a superstitious terror. They claim

that he can pierce the hardest bodies like a bullet and that nothing can stop him when he perceives a brilliant object. An Arab told me that his brother had been pierced by one of these beasts, who had also bent his stirrup at the same time. It is probable that the man had been shot by a bullet just as he noticed the snake.

In the neighborhood of Laghouat, on the contrary, this snake is not in the least feared and children take it in their hands.

The thought of all these dangerous inhabitants of the desert notably disturbed my slumbers in the reeds of Raïane-Chergui. Any rustling near my ears made me sit up with a start.

Night was falling; I awoke my companions in order to take a walk in the dunes and try to find some *léfaa* or sandfish.

The animal called a sandfish and to which the Arabs give the name *dob* (pronounced *dòb*) is another large specimen of lizard which lives in a hole in the sand and whose meat is said to be fairly good. We often followed the tracks of one without being able to find it. One also meets in the sand another tiny insect whose customs are very curious: the ant-lion. They dig a funnel-shaped hole about the size of a five-franc piece, then they ambush themselves at the bottom and wait. As soon as a spider or any other insect slips on the rapid incline which they have made, they dash sand upon him, stun, blind, and force him to tumble to the bottom; then they seize and devour him.

That day the ant-lion was our greatest recreation. Evening brought back the roast mutton, *kous-kous* and sour milk. When meal times came near I often thought of home.

Then we lay down on the rugs before the tents, as the heat was too intolerable to remain beneath them. We have before and behind us these two strange neighbors: the sand, as rough as a stormy sea, and the salt, as smooth as a calm lake.

The following day we crossed the dunes. It was like an ocean turned to dust during a hurricane; a silent storm of enormous, motionless waves of yellow sand. These uneven waves are as high as hills, crested and heaving like billows, but much higher, and striated like *moire*. On this furious, silent and motionless sea the scorching southern sun casts down its pitiless rays.

One must climb over these waves of golden ashes, tumble down the other side, climb up again, and again, without rest or shade. The horses choke, fall knee deep, and slip down the other side of these strange hills.

We could no longer talk, overcome by heat and parched by thirst like this burning desert.

At times, it is said, one is surprised in these valleys by an incomprehensible phenomenon which the Arabs consider to be a sure sign of death. Somewhere near one, from an indefinite direction, a drum beats, the mysterious drum of the dunes. It beats distinctly, sometimes louder, sometimes fainter, stopping and then taking up again its fantastical roll.

It seems that no one knows the cause of this surprising noise. It is usually attributed to the echo, increased, and multiplied, and greatly inflated by the undulations of the dunes, of grains of sand carried along by the wind and striking against patches of dry grass, for it has been noticed that this phenomenon always occurs in the neighborhood of lit-

tle plants burned by the sun and as hard as parchement.

This drum seems, therefore, to be a kind of sound-mirage.

As soon as we had left the dunes we noticed three horsemen galloping toward us. When they had arrived within about a hundred feet of us the leader jumped to the ground and came toward us with a slight limp. He was a man of about sixty, fairly stout (a thing seldom seen in this country), a harsh expression, sharp, deeply lined features. He wore the cross of the Legion of Honor. His name was Si Cherif-ben-Vhabeizzi, chief of the Oulad-Dia.

He made a long speech with a furious expression to invite us into his tent for refreshments.

This was the first time that I had entered into the tent of the nomad chief. A heap of gorgeous, curly woolen rugs covered the ground, other rugs were hung up to hide the bare canvas; others hung over our heads made a thick, impenetrable ceiling. Seats like divans, or rather thrones, were also covered with beautiful material; and a partition made of Oriental hangings cut the tent into two equal parts, separating us from the section inhabited by the women, whose voices we could at times overhear.

We sat down. The two sons of the chief took their places beside their father, who from time to time arose to say a word over the partition to the neighboring apartment; and an invisible hand would pass out a steaming dish which the chief would immediately offer us.

We could hear the little children playing and talking with their mothers. Who were these women? They were undoubtedly watching us, but we could not see them.

The Arabian woman is, as a rule, small, as white as milk, with the expression of a little lamb. She is modest only for her face. One sees working girls with their faces carefully veiled but with the body covered only with two strips of cloth falling one in front and one in back.

At fifteen these poor creatures, who ought to be pretty, are deformed and worn out by hard labor. They toil away from morning until night at every kind of work; sometimes they go to fetch water at a distance of several miles with a child on their backs. They appear old at twenty-five. Their faces, of which one gets an occasional glimpse, are tattooed with blue stars on their foreheads, cheeks and chins. One seldom sees the wives of rich Arabs.

As soon as the meal was over we left, and by evening we arrived at the salt rock of Khang-el-Melah. It is a kind of grayish-green mountain, with a bluish, metallic reflection and peculiar ridges. A mountain of salt! Water, by far more salty than of the ocean, escapes from the base and, evaporating in the scorching heat of the sun, it leaves on the ground a white froth—a foam of salt! The ground is covered under a light powder, as though some giant had amused himself scraping this mountain in order to sprinkle the dust about it. Large blocks, broken off, lie in the hollows—blocks of salt!

It seems that under this extraordinary rock are exceedingly deep wells inhabited by thousands of doves.

The following day we arrived at Djelfa. This is an ugly little town built after the French style, but occupied by most agreeable officers who made our stay there very pleasant.

After a short rest we started out again. We



began again our long journey through barren plains. From time to time we met herds of sand-colored sheep. Sometimes, far off in the horizon, we discerned strange-looking beasts, which in the distance looked small and who, with their hunched backs, long curved necks, slow movements, look like a flock of enormous turkeys. Then, on coming nearer, we recognized them for camels with their enormous bodies swollen out at both sides like a double balloon, like a giant gourd, as their stomachs are said to contain as much as sixty litres of water. They, too, were of the same color as the desert, as are all beings born in these yellow solitudes. The lion, the hyena, the jackal, the toad, the lizard, the scorpion, even man himself, all take on the various shades of the charred ground, from the yellowish red of the shifting dunes to the stony gray of the mountains. And the little lark of the plains is so much the color of dust that it can only be seen when it flies away.

On what do these creatures subsist in these Arab countries?

During the rainy season these plains are covered with grass in a few weeks, then in a few days the sun dries and burns this rapid growth. Then these plants also assume the color of the ground; they break, crumble and scatter over the ground like finely chopped straw and are no longer recognizable. But the animals know how to discover these remains and they live on them. They walk along looking for this powder of dried grass. They seem to be eating pebbles. What would a farmer in Normandy think of these pasture-lands?

We next crossed a region where even birds were scarce and where springs were not to be found. In

the distance we could see strange little columns of dust which looked like smoke, some straight, some leaning or bent, and running along the ground, a few yards high, wide at the top and narrow at the bottom. Gusts of wind raise and carry along these strange, transparent clouds, which are the only things showing any sign of movement in these lonesome stretches.

Five hundred yards ahead of our little troop rode a horseman guiding us through this dreary and even solitude. He would walk his horse for ten minutes, motionless on his saddle and singing in his native language a slow chant with the strange rhythm of those lands. We followed his pace. Then suddenly he would break into a trot, his body hardly shaken at all, the wide folds of his burnous fluttering behind him, standing straight in his stirrups. We would follow along behind him until he stopped to follow a slower pace. I asked my neighbor:

"How can he guide us through these barren lands without any marks for him to go by?"

"He follows the remains of camels," he answered.

True enough, every so often he would come across a few enormous bones, half eaten by the beasts of prey, bleached by the sun, and which made a white spot on the sand. Sometimes it was a piece of a leg, or a jaw bone, or part of a spinal column.

"Where do all these carcasses come from?" I asked.

"The caravans leave behind them every animal which cannot keep up with the rest; and the jackals do not carry away everything," my neighbor answered.

For several days we have continued this monoto-

nous journey behind the same Arab, in the same order, always on horseback, hardly saying a word.

One afternoon just before we expected to arrive at Bou-Saada, I noticed before us a strangely shaped brown mass, the size of which was increased by the mirage. As we came nearer two vultures flew away. It was a carrion, still soft and covered with decayed blood, notwithstanding the heat. The chest alone remained; the other parts had undoubtedly been carried away by the ravenous scavengers.

"We have travelers ahead of us," said the lieutenant.

Several hours later we entered a kind of ravine, or pass, a scorching furnace with rocks jagged and pointed like a saw, which looked as though they were raging and rebelling against the pitiless sky. Another body was lying there; a jackal flew away at our approach.

Then again, just as we were coming out into a plain, a gray mass, stretched out before us, moved and slowly raised its head at the end of a long neck. It was a dying camel. He had been lying there on his side for perhaps two or three days, dying of thirst and fatigue. His long legs, which looked as though they were broken and inert, were stretched out on the burning sand, and he, seeing us come, raised his head like a signal. His forehead, eaten by the pitiless sun, was a running sore; his eyes followed us with a resigned look. He did not utter a single groan nor make the slightest effort to arise. One might think that, having seen so many of his brothers die the same way on these long journeys through the solitude, he knew full well the heartlessness of human beings. It was his turn, that was all. We passed on.

I turned around a long time afterward, and I noticed, raised up from the sand, the long neck of the abandoned creature, watching us disappear beyond the horizon, the last living things that it was ever to see.

An hour later we saw a dog cowering against a rock, mouth open, fangs bared, unable to make a motion, steadily watching two vultures which were standing beside him awaiting his death. He was so overcome by the fear of these patient birds eagerly awaiting his flesh that he did not look around, nor did he seem to feel the stones which a spahi threw at him as we were passing by.

Suddenly, just as we were leaving another pass, I saw before me the oasis.

It is an unforgettable sight. After just crossing endless plains, climbing steep, barren, parched mountains without meeting a tree, a plant, a green leaf, and here, before our very feet, we find an opaque mass of dark verdure, something like a lake of black foliage extending out over the sand. Then beyond this spot the desert starts again, stretching over to the endless horizon, where the earth mingles with the sky.

The city slopes down to the gardens. What cities they are, these cities of the Sahara! A collection and accumulation of cubes of mud dried in the sun. All these square huts of hardened mud are built one up against the other, leaving between their capricious lines a kind of narrow gallery like the passages dug by animals.

The whole town is built of diluted clay, which makes one think of the dwellings of animals, of the work of beavers, of work done without any other

tools than those which nature has given to creatures of an inferior order.

From place to place a magnificent palm tree rises about twenty feet above the ground. Suddenly we enter a forest whose paths are inclosed between high walls of clay. To the right and to the left, a mass of date trees open up their leaves like parasols over the gardens, sheltering with their thick and fresh shades the delicate fruit trees beneath. Under the shade of these giant palm trees, which the wind shakes like large fans, grow grapevines, apricot, fig, pomegranate trees and priceless vegetables.

The water from the river is kept in large reservoirs and is distributed to the inhabitants as is gas in our country. A strict account is kept of how much each person uses; and it is allowed to run through each person's trench for an hour or two each week, according to the extent of the property.

Wealth is reckoned by the number of palm trees possessed by each person. These trees are the guardians of life; they protect the sap of the other trees and stand continually with their roots in the water while the topmost branches are scorched by the fiery sun.

The valley of Bou-Saada, which brings the river to the gardens, is as wonderful as a land of dreams. Covered with date and fig trees, with wonderful plants, it descends between two mountains whose peaks are red. All along the rapid flowing little river Arabian women, with their heads veiled and their legs uncovered, wash their clothes by dancing on them. They roll them into a bundle, throw them into the current, and beat them down with their naked feet, balancing themselves gracefully.

Along this ravine the stream trickles and bab-

bles. When it leaves the oasis it is still abundant; but the desert which is awaiting it, the thirsty yellow desert, drinks it up at one gulp at the gates of the gardens, suddenly swallows it in its dried sands.

When one observes the city from the mosque, at sunset, the aspect is most peculiar. The flat, square roofs make a sort of cascade of mud chessboards or dirty handkerchiefs. On these the whole population moves about as they climb to the roof at sunset. In the streets one sees no one, one hears nothing, but as soon as one can catch a glimpse of several roofs, from some elevated spot, one sees an extraordinary movement. Supper is being prepared. Groups of ragged children swarm in the corners; this formless bundle of dirty clothes which represents the common Arabian woman is preparing the *kous-kous* or busy at some other occupation.

Night falls. Then the rugs of the Djebel-Amour are spread out on this roof, after carefully chasing away the scorpions, which multiply at a great rate in these huts; finally the whole family falls asleep in the open air under the mass of twinkling stars.

The oasis of Bou-Saada, although small, is one of the most delightful ones of all Algeria. In the neighborhood one can hunt the gazelle, which abounds here. There is also a great number of the fearful *léfaa* and even of the hideous, long-legged tarantula, the shadows of which one can see at night running along the walls of the cabins.

This village is quite a trade center, as it is on the road to Mozab.

The Mozabites and the Jews are the only two tradesmen, business men, and the only industrious people in all this part of Africa.

As soon as one advances southward the Jewish



race reveals itself under a hideous aspect which makes one understand the intense hatred of certain peoples for this nation, and even the recent massacres. The European Jews, the Algerian Jews, the Jews whom we know, with whom we come in contact every day, our neighbors and our friends, are men of the world, educated, intelligent, very often charming. And we grow indignant when we hear that the inhabitants of some unknown and distant little town have killed or drowned several hundred children of Israel. I am no longer surprised; for our Jews hardly resemble the Jews from over there.

At Bou-Saada one sees them crouching in filthy hovels, bloated and sordid, watching the Arab as a spider watches a fly. They call him, try to lend him five francs in consideration of a paper which he is to sign. The man knows the danger, hesitates, and does not wish to. But the desire for drink and other things urges him on. Five francs means so much pleasure to him!

At last he gives in and signs the greasy paper.

At the end of three months he will owe ten francs. A hundred francs at the end of the year, two hundred francs at the end of three years. Then the Jew sells his land, if he has any, or otherwise his camel, his horse, his mule, anything that he may own.

The chiefs, *caïds*, *aghas* or *bach'aghas*, fall equally well into the traps set by these rapacious creatures, who are the pest of our colony, the great obstacle to the civilization and well-being of the Arab.

When a French detachment makes an invasion into some rebellious tribe, a flock of Jews follows it, buying for a song the spoils which they sell back to the Arabs as soon as the soldiers are out of sight.



If, for instance, six thousand sheep are seized in some neighborhood, what can be done with these beasts? Lead them to the city? They would die on the way, for how could they be fed and watered during a journey of two hundred miles across these barren lands? And then, in order to take and keep such a convoy, it would be necessary to take along twice as many soldiers.

What is to be done? Kill them? What a massacre and what a loss! And then the Jews are there ready to buy the sheep at two francs a head, which are worth at least twenty. Anyhow the treasury will make twelve thousand francs. They let the animals go.

A week later, the first owners have bought back their sheep at three francs a head. Truly French vengeance is not expensive.

The Jew is master of all southern Algeria. There is, indeed, hardly an Arab without debts, for the Arab does not like to return things. He prefers to renew his note at one or two hundred per cent. He always thinks himself saved when he gains time. There ought to be a law passed to modify this deplorable state of affairs.

Throughout the south the Jew deals in hardly anything but usury, making use of the most dishonest methods. The real merchants are the Mozabites.

When one arrives at any village of the Sahara, one is immediately struck by a peculiar race of men who seem to have taken into their hands the business of the country. They alone have stores; they keep the European and local merchandise. They are intelligent and active and commercial to the backbone. They are the Beni-Mozad or Mozabites.

They have been nicknamed "the Jews of the desert."

The Arab, the true Arab, the man from the tent, for whom all work is dishonorable, despises the commercial Mozabite; but he comes at regular intervals to get his provisions from him; he intrusts to him the precious objects which he cannot carry with him in his roaming life. A sort of continual agreement seems to exist between them.

Thus the Mozabites have monopolized all the trade of northern Africa. They are to be found as much in our cities as in the Saharian villages. Then, his fortune made, the merchant returns to Mozab, where he must undergo a kind of purification before being allowed to regain his political rights.

These Arabs can be recognized by their size; they are smaller and stockier than the other tribes. Their faces are often flat and very broad, with thick lips, and their eyes are usually set deep under heavy, straight eyebrows. They are schismatic Mussulmans. They belong to one of the three dissenting sects of northern Africa, and they seem, according to some learned man, to be the actual descendants of the last of the Kharedji sect.

The country of these people is perhaps the strangest land in Africa.

Their fathers, expelled from Syria by the army of the Prophet, established themselves in the Djebel-Nefoussa, west of Tripoli in Barbary.

Successively repulsed from all points where they settled down, on account of the jealousy aroused as a result of their industry and intelligence, looked upon with suspicion on account of their faith, they settled down in the most barren, desolate and hottest country of all. In Arabian it is called Hammada

(overheated) and Chebka (net) because it resembles an immense network of black rocks.

The land of the Mozabites is situated at about one hundred miles from Laghouat.

This is how Commander Coyne, the man who knows best the southern portion of Algeria, describes his arrival at Mozab, in a most interesting pamphlet:

“About in the middle of the Chebka is a sort of arena formed by a belt of very shiny calcareous rocks sloping steeply to the inside. It is cut to the northwest and to the southwest by two deep gullies through which flows the Oued-Mozab. This arena is about ten miles long by one mile wide and incloses five of the cities of the federation of the Mozab, and the grounds which are exclusively cultivated into gardens by the inhabitants of this valley.

“Seen from the exterior and from the northern and eastern sides, this belt of rocks offers the aspect of a collection of tombstones placed one on top of the other without any special kind of order; one might think it an immense Arabian burial ground. Nature herself appears dead. There not a single trace of vegetation rests the eye; the birds of prey themselves seem to flee these desolate regions. Alone the fierce rays of the sun are reflected from these walls of a grayish rock, producing shadows of a fantastic design.

“Therefore, great is the astonishment, I might even say the enthusiasm, of the traveler when, from the crest of this line of rocks, he discovers, in the interior of the arena, five populous cities, surrounded by gardens of a luxurious vegetation, standing out in dark green against the reddish bed of the Oued-Mozab.

“ Around him in the barren desert, death; at his feet lie the evident proofs of an advanced civilization.”

Mozab is a republic, or rather a *commune* like that which the Parisian revolutionists of 1871 tried to establish.

No one in Mozab has the right to be idle, and the children, as soon as they are able to walk, help their fathers water the plants, which constitutes the principal occupation of the inhabitants. From morning till night the mule or the camel draws in leather buckets the water, which is then poured into trenches, ingeniously arranged so that not a drop of the precious liquid is lost.

Mozab contains besides this a great number of reservoirs for holding rain-water. It is, therefore, infinitely more advanced than our Algeria.

Rain means happiness, assured ease and a safe harvest for the Mozabites; therefore, as soon as it begins to fall, a kind of wildness takes hold of the inhabitants. They run out into the streets, discharge their guns, sing, run to the gardens, to the river, which begins to flow again, and to the dams, whose maintenance is assured by every citizen. As soon as the dam is threatened, every one must run to it.

These people, by their constant work, their industry, and their wisdom, made of the most savage and desolate part of the Sahara a living country, planted and cultivated, where seven cities prosper in the sun. Therefore, the Mozabite is very jealous of his fatherland, and prevents, as far as he can, any European from gaining admittance to it. In certain cities, like Beni-Isguem, no foreigner can sleep even for a single night.

They are their own police. No one would refuse to render assistance in case of necessity. There are in this country neither poor nor beggars. The needy are taken care of. Nearly every one can read and write.

Everywhere there are schools and large public buildings. Many Mozabites, after spending a short time in our cities, return to their own home knowing French, Italian, and Spanish.

Commander Coyne's pamphlet contains many interesting details about this curious little nation.

At Bou-Saada, just as in all the oases and towns, it is the Mozabites who carry on the trade and exchange, keep stores of every kind, and belong to all the professions.

After spending four days in this little city of the Sahara, I left for the coast.

The mountains which one meets on the way to the sea have a peculiar aspect. They look like enormous castles with miles of battlements. They are regular, square, and carved out as though by mathematical rule. The highest one is flat and appears to be inaccessible. Its shape has caused it to be called the "billiard-table." Some time before my arrival two officers climbed it for the first time. On the summit they found two enormous Roman cisterns.



#### THE KABYLIA—BOUGIE



ERE we are in the richest and most populous part of Algeria. The country of the Kabyles is mountainous, covered with forests and fields.

On leaving Aumale we descend toward the great valley of the Sahel.

Over in the distance we see an immense mountain, the Djurjura. Its highest points are gray as though covered with ashes. On all the lower peaks one sees villages which look like a heap of white stones. Others cling to the sides. Throughout this fertile country there is a terrific struggle between the Europeans and the natives for the possession of the soil.

Kabylia has a greater population than the most thickly settled section of France. It is not nomadic, but sedentary and industrious. Therefore, the Algerian's one aim is to rob the native. Here are a

few of the systems used to drive away and despoil the unfortunate native landowners.

Some person, leaving France, goes to the office in charge of the distribution of lands and asks for a grant in Algeria. A hat containing a number of slips of paper is presented him; he draws a number corresponding to a section of land. Hereafter this lot belongs to him.

He leaves. Over there in a native village he finds a whole family settled on the concession which has been allotted to him. This family has prepared, tilled, and cultivated the soil on which it lives. It has nothing else to live on. The foreigner drives it away. It goes away resigned, since *this is French law*. But these people, without resource for the future, flee to the desert and become rebels.

Sometimes the foreigner makes an agreement with the native. The European, frightened by the heat and the aspect of the country, enters into negotiations with the Kabyle, who becomes his farmer. And the native who remains on *his own* land sends, no matter what his crops may yield, one thousand, fifteen hundred or two thousand francs to the European who has returned to France.

This is equal to a pension from the government. Here is another method:

The House votes a credit of forty or fifty million francs to be used toward the colonization of Algeria. What will be done with this money? Perhaps they will build dams, or plant trees at the tops of the mountains in order to hold the water, or try to fertilize barren plains. Not in the least. The Arab will be dispossessed. Now in Kabylia land has reached quite a high value. The best is worth three thousand two hundred francs an acre; it ordinarily sells for



eight hundred francs. The native landowners lived quietly on the produce of their work. Once rich they do not revolt; all they ask is to be left in peace. What is the result? Fifty million francs are to be disposed of. Kabylia is the most beautiful country of Algeria. Well, the natives are dispossessed in favor of unknown colonists. How are they dispossessed? They are paid *eighty francs an acre* for land which is worth, at the lowest valuation, *sixteen hundred francs*. Then the head of the family goes away without a word (it is the law), anywhere, with all his people, the men, now idle, the women and the children.

These people are neither merchants nor manufacturers, they are only farmers. Therefore, the family lives as long as there is anything left of the ridiculous sum which was given them. Then comes misery. The men snatch up their guns and follow some chief like Bou-Amama in order to prove once more that Algeria can only be governed by a military head.

The principle seems to be: "We will leave the natives in the fertile sections as long as there is a scarcity of Europeans; then as soon as some come we will dispossess the original owners."

"Very well, but what do you expect to do when there are no longer any fertile sections?"

"We will fertilize artificially then!"

"Well, why do you not fertilize immediately, since you have an appropriation of fifty million?"

They see private companies building gigantic dams in order to supply water to whole sections; they see by the remarkable works of talented engineers that they would only have to plant forests on certain mountain tops in order to reclaim entire

districts below; and yet, they do not find another way except to dispossess the Arabs!

It is only fair to add that as soon as the Tell has been crossed the land becomes barren and arid, almost impossible to farm. Alone the Arab, who lives for a day on a pinch of flour and a few figs, can exist in this parched country. The European cannot make a living here. Therefore there are only a few restricted places which can be colonized, unless—the natives be driven away. That is what is being done.

In short, with the exception of the fortunate owners in the plain of the Mitidja, those who have obtained land in Kabylia by one of the above-mentioned methods, and in general with the exception of all who have settled along the coast, in the narrow stretch of land limited by the Atlas Mountains, the colonists are wretchedly poor. Algeria can only receive a limited number of foreigners. Only a few more can find a living there.

Moreover it is most difficult to govern this colony, for reasons that can readily be understood. As large as a European kingdom, Algeria is formed of regions most dissimilar, inhabited by populations of essentially different characters. This is a state of affairs which no government, up to the present time, has seemed to understand.

It is necessary to have a full knowledge of each section in order to pretend to govern it, for each one needs laws, regulations, provisions and precautions totally different from those of its neighbor. Now, the governor, whoever he may be, is fatally and completely ignorant of all these matters of details and customs; he must, therefore, depend entirely on his subordinates.

Who are these subordinates? Colonists? People brought up in the country, understanding all its needs? By no means! They are simply young men, almost youths, who come from Paris in the governor's following. Here we find one of these young ignoramuses governing fifty or a hundred thousand men. He makes one blunder after another and ruins the country. It is only natural.

There are, however, exceptions. Sometimes the all-powerful delegate of the government works, tries to learn and understand. It would take him at least ten years to begin to get at the bottom of things. After six months he is transferred. He is sent, for family, personal or other reasons, to the frontier of Tunis or Morocco. He arrives there and immediately begins to administer the country by the same methods which he was using over there, confident, in his superficial experience, that the same rules and regulations can be applied to these people so essentially different.

Therefore it is not so much a good governor that is needed, but above all a competent staff.

In order to remedy this deplorable state of affairs and these disastrous customs an attempt was made to found a school of administration where the elementary principles necessary for governing this country would be taught to a class of young men. The project failed. Those surrounding M. Albert Grévy undermined. Favoritism once more gained the upper hand.

The staff of the administrators is therefore recruited in a peculiar manner. True, it contains also some intelligent and hard-working men. When the government is short of candidates it usually makes advances to former officers in the Arabian service.

They at least know the natives thoroughly, but it is difficult to admit that their change of costume would immediately change their principles of administration; and we should not discharge them angrily as officers only to take them back when they put on civilians' clothes.

Since I have allowed myself to touch upon this delicate question of the administration of Algeria, I wish to add a few words about a subject of paramount importance which should be rapidly solved; it concerns the great native chiefs who are the only real, all-powerful administrators of that whole section of our colony included between the Tell and the desert.

At the beginning of the French rule the title of *agha* and also of *bach-agha* was conferred upon the chiefs who offered the best guaranty of loyalty and extended influence over the tribes of a large territory. Our strength would have been of no avail; for it we substituted that of the Arab chiefs won over to our cause, resigning ourselves in advance to possible treasons, which were fairly frequent. The measure was wise and diplomatic; taken all in all it gave good results. Certain *aghas* rendered us valuable assistance, and, thanks to them, the lives of perhaps thousands of French soldiers were saved.

But because a measure has once been excellent it does not follow that it remains perfect, notwithstanding all the modifications which time may bring to a country which is in the process of colonization. To-day the presence among the tribes of these potentates, alone respected and obeyed, is a cause of permanent danger to us and an unsurmountable obstacle to the civilization of the Arabs. Neverthe-

less, the military party seems energetically to defend the system of the native chiefs against the tendency of the civil party to suppress them.

I am in no position to discuss such a serious question; but it is sufficient to take the trip which I took through the tribes in order clearly to perceive the enormous difficulties which might arise from the actual situation. Let me cite a few facts:

The long resistance of Bou-Amama is due almost entirely to the *agha* of Saïda.

At the beginning of the insurrection this *agha* with his soldiers was on his way to join the French troops. On the road he met the Trafis, who were traveling along with the same intention. They joined forces.

Now the *agha* of Saïda is loaded down with debts which he is unable to pay. The idea came to him, probably, to make a little raid during the night, for, gathering together his troop, he attacked the Trafis. The latter were at first beaten, but later on they gained the advantage and forced the *agha* of Saïda to flee with his men.

But, since the *agha* of Saïda is our ally, and, as he is the representative of French authority, our lieutenant, the Trafis persuaded themselves that we were behind the matter; and, instead of joining the French forces, they immediately went over to Bou-Amama, whom they never left and whose principal force they constituted.

The example is typical, is it not? And the *agha* of Saïda has remained our faithful friend. He marches under our flag!

Again, there is a celebrated *agha* whom our military authorities treat with the utmost consideration, because his influence extends over a large number

of tribes. Sometimes he helps us, sometimes he betrays us, according to whichever is the more to his advantage. Openly allied to the French from whom he holds his authority, he secretly lends his hand to every insurrection. Indeed, he forsakes either side for a chance to plunder.

After having undeniably had a hand in the murder of Colonel Beauprête, to-day he marches with us. But he is strongly suspected of having largely participated in many of the disasters which we have suffered.

Our firm ally, the *agha* of Frenda, has often warned us of the double play of this potentate. We turned a deaf ear because, although he may help our enemies, he also renders us military assistance.

This peculiar situation, the open protection with which we shield this chief, assures him immunity for a multitude of misdeeds which he daily commits. This is what happens:

Throughout the whole of Algeria the Arabs are continually robbing each other. Not a night goes by without notice being given that twenty camels have been stolen here, a hundred sheep there, that some cattle have been taken from near Biskra, some horses from Djelfa. The thieves are never to be found. And yet there is not an officer in the Arabian service who does not know where the stolen beasts are taken! They go straight to this *agha* who acts as "fence" for all the desert bandits. The stolen animals are placed in with his enormous herds; he keeps part of them for the price of his trouble and returns the others after a certain amount of time, when the danger of discovery has passed.

No one in the whole south ignores this state of affairs. But this man is needed, and his great in-

fluence grows every day through the assistance which he renders to all the miscreants. We close our eyes to his misdeeds.

Therefore this chief is immensely rich, while the *agha* of Djelfa, for instance, has almost ruined himself in the interest of colonization, by developing farms, clearing away the land, etc.

But besides these facts, any number of more serious results accrue from the presence among the tribes of these native rulers. In order fully to understand the matter, one should have an accurate idea of Algeria as it actually stands.

The territory and the population of our colony is very clearly divided. There are first of all the coast towns, which have scarcely more to do with the interior of Algeria than the cities of France themselves have to do with this colony. The inhabitants of these Algerian coast towns are essentially sedentary; they only feel the reaction of the events which happen in the territory; but their influence on the Arabian territory is absolutely nil.

The second zone, the Tell, is partly occupied by European colonists. Now, the colonist sees in the Arab only an enemy from whom land is to be wrested. He hates him instinctively, pursues him continually, and robs him when he can. The Arab retaliates in the same manner.

The quarrelsome hostility of the Arabs and the colonists is the cause that the latter can have no civilizing influence over the former. In this region things are not yet at the worst. The European element is continually tending to replace the native element; it will not be very long before the Arab, ruined or dispossessed, will take refuge farther south. Now, it is necessary that our conquered



neighbors keep the peace. For that we must make our authority felt at all times and, above all, see to it that our influence shall be the predominating one.

What happens to-day?

The tribes, scattered over an immense territory, never receive a visit of a European. Alone the officers, from time to time, make a round of inspection, and they are satisfied to ask the leaders what is happening in the tribe. But the leader is placed under the authority of the native chief, the *agha* or *bach-agma*. If this chief be from a noble and illustrious family, respected throughout the desert, then his influence is unlimited. All the leaders obey him just as they would have done before the French rule; and nothing that takes place ever comes to the ears of the military authorities.

The tribe is then a sealed book for us, through respect and fear of the *agha*, who continues the traditions of his ancestors in making all kinds of extortionate demands from his Arabian subjects. He is master and makes them give him whatever he wishes, sometimes one hundred, sometimes two hundred sheep, in short, he acts like a regular despot; and as he holds his authority from us, it is the continuation of the ancient Arabian system under the French government, hierarchical thievery, etc., etc., without taking into account the fact that we are nothing, and that we are absolutely ignorant of the state of the country.

It is entirely due to this situation that we never have anything but a faint suspicion of a rebellion, until just as it is breaking out.

Therefore, the presence of the great native chiefs indefinitely postpones the real and direct influence

of French authority on the tribes, which remain for us an unknown world.

What is the remedy? It is as follows: Almost all these chiefs, with the exception of two or three, are in need of money. They should be given an income of ten, twenty, thirty thousand livres for the influence and services which they have already rendered us and then they should be forced to live either in Algiers or in some other coast city. Certain military men claim that an insurrection would follow this measure. They probably have their own reason for claiming this. Other officers, living in the interior, maintain on the contrary that this would mean peace.

This is not all. These men would have to be replaced by public officials who would live constantly among the tribes and exercise a direct influence over the leader. In this manner, civilization might penetrate little by little into these lands, once this great obstacle is removed.

But useful reforms arrive as slowly in Algeria as they do in France.

While crossing Kabylia I had a proof of the complete powerlessness of our authority even among the tribes which live among the Europeans.

I was going toward the sea, following the long valley which leads from Beni-Mansour to Bougie. Before us, in the distance, a strange, heavy cloud hid the horizon. Over our heads the sky was of this milky blue which it takes on during the summer in these hot countries; but over there was a brownish yellow haze which seemed to be neither a storm, nor fog, nor one of these blinding sand-storms which pass with the fury of a hurricane, enveloping the whole country in its gray shadow. This heavy,

opaque cloud, almost black at its base and lighter toward the top, stretched across the broad valley like a wall. Then, in the still air, we suddenly noticed a vague odor of burnt wood. But what gigantic fire could produce such a mountain of smoke?

For it was indeed smoke. All the forests of Kabylia had taken fire. Soon we entered into a suffocating semi-darkness. We could not see a hundred yards ahead of us. The horses were breathing with difficulty. Night seemed to have come, and a barely perceptible wind, one of these slow breezes which scarcely moves the leaves was slowly pushing this floating night into the sea.

We waited two hours in a village for news; then we started out again as soon as real darkness had spread over the earth.

An uncertain light, still far away, was lighting the sky like a meteor. It grew and grew, lighting the horizon with a light which was more bloodlike than brilliant. But suddenly, at a sharp turn of the valley, I thought myself opposite an immense lighted city. It was an entire mountain already burned; the branches of the trees were cold while the trunks of the oaks and olive trees remained incandescent, enormous embers, smokeless, standing by the thousands like colossal lights on lengthy boulevards; squares, winding streets, appearing with the regularity or with the unevenness which one notices from the distance in a lighted city at night.

As we approached the great furnace the lights grew brilliant. During this one day the fire had burned twelve miles of forest.

When I saw the line of fire I stood there terrified and delighted before the most terrible and impres-

sive spectacle that I have ever seen. The fire was sweeping over an immense breadth like a wave. It was razing the country, continually advancing at a rapid pace. The bushes flared up and died out. The great trees burned slowly like torches waving in the air, while the short flame ran along the underbrush.

All night we followed this immense brazier. At daybreak we gained the sea.

Hemmed in by strange mountains with jagged crests, charming with their wooded slopes, lay the Gulf of Bougie, blue of a creamy blue, though clear, of an incredible transparency, it rounds itself out under the sky of a fixed azure.

At the end of the hill, to the left, on the steep side of the mountain, in a mass of greenery, the town tumbles down toward the sea like a stream of white houses.

When one enters it, it gives the impression of one of those dainty and improbable little stage cities, such as we sometimes dream of in visions of impossible lands.

It has Moorish houses, French houses and ruins everywhere, the kind of ruins which one expects to see before a canvas castle.

On arriving close to the water, on the wharf where the transatlantic steamers are moored, where are made fast the fishing boats from over there, with their sails which look like the wings of birds, we see, in the midst of a regular fairyland, ruins so magnificent that they seem unnatural. It is the old ivy-covered Saracen gate.

Everywhere in the wooded hills around the city are ruins, remains of Roman walls, pieces of Saracen monuments, relics of Arabian buildings.

The day passed by quiet and hot, then came night, and with it, all around the bay, a wonderful sight. As the shadows darkened another brilliancy than daylight filled the sky. The fire, like a besieging army, was surrounding the city and closing in upon it. New fires, lighted by the Kabyles, appeared from time to time and were beautifully reflected in the calm waters of the vast basin surrounded by the smouldering hills. At times the fire looked like a string of Venetian lanterns or the writhings of a twisting snake on the undulations of the mountains. At times it would flash forth like the eruption of a volcano with a brilliant center and an immense puff of red smoke, according as it was consuming stretches of underbrush or of tall old trees.

I remained six days in this flaming country, then I left by the matchless road which follows along the gulf, and the forest-covered mountains, and the golden sands bathed in the quiet water of the Mediterranean.

At times the fire reached down to the road. Then we would have to jump out of the carriage to remove the burning trees which had fallen across our path, or otherwise we would gallop along between two walls of fire, one descending to the bottom of a deep ravine where rushed a seething torrent, the other climbing to the top of a mountain, laying waste everything in its path. Hills already burned and extinguished looked as though they were covered with a black veil, a veil of mourning. Then again we crossed countries still intact. Anxious colonists, standing in their doorways, ask for news of the fire just as, at the time of the German war in France, people asked for information about the advance of the enemy.

We saw jackals, hyenas, foxes, hares, hundreds of different animals fleeing before this plague, maddened by the fear of the flame.

At a bend in the valley I suddenly saw five telegraph wires so loaded down with swallows that they bent strangely, forming between each post five garlands of birds. The driver snapped his long whip, a cloud of swallows flew away and scattered through the air; the heavy wires, suddenly released, leaped up like the string of a bow. They vibrated thus for a long time.

Soon we penetrated into the gorges of the Chabet-el-Akhra. Leaving the sea to our left, we entered the opening in the mountain. This pass is one of the most gorgeous in the world. The cut often narrows down; barren granite peaks, reddish, brown or blue, come closer, leaving at their base only a narrow opening for the water. The road is nothing more than a narrow cornice carved in the rock itself, over the foaming torrent.

The aspect of this barren gorge, wild and superb, is continually changing. The two inclosing walls sometimes rise to a height of seven thousand feet; and the sun can only penetrate to the bottom of this well when it is exactly over it.

At the further end we arrive at the village of Kerrata. For a week the inhabitants have been watching the black smoke of the fire issue from the sombre pass as from a gigantic chimney.

The Algerian government claim after this disaster, which it could easily have avoided with a little foresight and energy, that it did not originate from the Kabyles. It also maintained that the devastated forests did not amount to more than one hundred thousand acres.

Here is a despatch from the sub-prefect of Philippeville:

"I have been informed by the mayor and administrator of Jemmapes that all the forest lands have been burned to the ground and that the fire has destroyed all the villages of the mixed community. The villages of Gastu, Aïn-Cherchar, and Djendel have been threatened.

"At Philippeville all the trees have been burned.

"Stora, Saint-Antoine, Valée, Damrémont, almost all fell prey to the flames.

"At El-Arouch there has been little waste outside of a thousand acres burned in the villages of the Oulad-Messaoud, Hazabra, and El-Ghedir.

"At Saint-Charles about twelve hundred acres were burned between the Oued-Deb and the Oued-Goudi, and sixteen hundred acres to the northeast and southeast. Forage and huts destroyed.

"At Attia and the mixed village Collo the fire laid waste everything.

"The concessions of Teissier, Lesseps, Levat, Lefebvre, Siber, Besin, etc., are partly or totally destroyed. More than eighty thousand acres of woodland went with them. The farms and houses of the Zeriban have been consumed by the flames. There have been numerous human victims.

"This morning we buried three Zouaves, who died near Valée in the discharge of their duty.

"The damage is enormous and cannot even be given approximately.

"The danger has disappeared to a great extent through the destruction of the forest. The wind has also changed its direction, and I believe that we shall be able to master the last fires, namely those on the properties of Besson, Collo, and at the Estaya near Robertville.

"Yesterday I requisitioned a passing steamer and sent one hundred and fifty men to Collo."

Let us add to this the forest fires of the Zeramna, Fil-Fila, Fendek, etc.

M. Bisern, for forty years contractor for the forest of El-Milia, wrote the following:



"My staff gave proof of the greatest energy; it ran the greatest danger, and twice we were able to master the flames. But all this was useless. While we were fighting the fire on one side, the Arabs were lighting it in many different places on the other side."

Here is a letter from a landowner:

"I have the honor of announcing to you that toward the middle of the night from Sunday to Monday, my farmer, Ripeyere, on watch over my property, situated above the drill ground, saw four attempts of arson: one in the public grounds, another a few hundred yards from my property, a third near Damrémont, and the last at Valée. The wind died down and the fire was unable to spread."

Here is a despatch from Djidjelli:

"DJIDJELLI, August 23, 3:16 P. M.

"The fire is destroying the forest concession of the Beni-Amram belonging to M. Edouard Carpentier of Djidjelli.

"Last night it was started in twenty different places; a laborer coming from the mine of Cavalho distinctly saw all the fires.

"This morning, almost under the very eyes of the Calid Amar-ben-Habiles of the tribe of the Beni-Foughal, the fire was set to the canton of Mezrech; a quarter of an hour later it was starting at another point in the same canton, in a direction contrary to that of the wind.

"Finally, in the same instant, about four hundred feet away from where the chief was standing with fifty Arabs of his tribe, another fire broke out, still with the wind in the opposite direction.

"It is therefore evident that the fire was started by the native population and in obedience to a given signal."

I might add that, having myself spent a week in the middle of the fire-ravaged country, one evening I saw, with my own eyes, the fire spring simultaneously from eight different points in the middle of a forest, five miles from any human habitation.

It is certain that, if we kept a stricter watch over

the native tribes, these disasters, which are repeated every four or five years, would not happen.

The government seems to think that it has done all that is necessary when, as the season of great heat approaches, it has renewed the instruction concerning the patrolling of forests given in Article 4 of the ordinances of July 17, 1874. This section runs as follows:

"The native population in forested regions, during the period between July 1 and November 1, are compelled, under penalty of Article 8, to exercise particular vigilance and to stand watch at a post which shall be assigned by the Governor-General."

We suspect the natives of wishing to set fire to the forests, and then we confide them to their care!

Is not this an example of monumental stupidity?

This order was undoubtedly punctiliously executed. Each native was at his post—only—he set fire.

True, another clause orders a special watch to be exercised by an officer appointed by the Governor-General. This order received little or no attention.

Let us add that the Forest Administration, which is probably the most quarrelsome one of all the Algerian departments, generally does all that it can to exasperate the natives.

Finally, in order to return to the question of colonization, the government, in order to help the establishment of Europeans, makes use of the most unjust method against the Arab. Why should not the colonists follow an example which agrees so well with their interests?

I must add, however, that in the last few years men of considerable capacity, experts in all questions of culture, seem to have directed the colony

into a decidedly better channel. Algeria is becoming productive as a result of the efforts of these men. The population which is now in the process of formation no longer works only in the interest of personal gain, but also for the welfare of France.

It is certain that the land will yield much more when in the hands of these men than it ever would have if cultivated by the Arabs; it is also certain that the native population will eventually disappear little by little; this disappearance will undoubtedly prove most useful to Algeria, but it is revolting to think under what conditions it is occurring.



## CONSTANTINE



FROM Chabet to Sétif is like crossing a golden land. The crops are cut high and not mown flat and trampled upon by the cattle as in France; they mingle their light straw-yellow to the darker red of the earth and give to the ground exactly that warm tint of old gold.

Sétif is one of the ugliest towns it is possible to see.

Then we cross over endless plains to Constantine. Patches of green here and there make them look like a pine table over which had been scattered toy trees out of a Noah's ark.

Here is Constantine, the phenomenal city, Constantine the strange, guarded by a serpent writhing at its feet, the Roumel, that fantastic stream of the poem, which might have been dreamed of by Dante, flowing at the bottom of an abyss, as red as though the eternal flames had scorched it. This jealous and surprising river makes an island of its city. It surrounds it with a winding and terrible whirlpool, with glistening and strange rocks and straight walls.

The Arabs say that the city resembles a burnous

spread out. They call it Belad-el-Haoua, the city of the air, the city of the ravine, the city of passions. It overlooks wonderful valleys full of Roman ruins, aqueducts with giant arcades, covered with a wonderful vegetation. Above it are the heights of Mansoura and of Sidi-Mecid.

It stands like a queen, on its river-encircled rock. It is glorified by an old saying: "Bless the memory of your ancestors," it says to the inhabitants, "who built your city on a rock. You look down on those who would look down on you."

The crowded streets are even more lively than those of Algiers, swarming with light, continually crossed by the strangest of people, by Arabs, Kabyles, Biskris, Mozabs, negroes, veiled Moorish women, red spahis, blue Turcomans, solemn-looking cadis, brilliantly uniformed officers. Merchants drive before them their asses, those little African animals as high as dogs; horses, slow and majestic camels.

Hail to the Jewesses! Here they are of a superb, severe and charming beauty. They pass by draped rather than clothed, draped in brilliant cloth with a matchless knowledge of what effects and shades best bring out their beauty. They walk around with their arms naked from the shoulder, the arms of a statue, which they boldly expose to the sun as they do their calm faces with the pure straight lines. The sun seems powerless to affect this polished skin.

The charming thing about Constantine is the crowd of dainty little girls, tiny ones. Dressed up as though for a fancy-dress ball in trailing blue or red silk dresses, wearing over their heads long golden or silver veils, their eyebrows penciled into a long arch over their eyes, their nails tinted, their cheeks sometimes tattooed with a star, with a bold

and already provoking stare, conscious of admiration, they trot along, giving their hand to some tall Arab, their servant.

One might think that they had just stepped out of some fairy-tale, a nation of little *femmes galantes*; for they look like women, these little girls, women by their dress, by their awakening coquettishness, by the expressions on their faces. They already use their eyes like the oldest ones; they are charming, troubling, and irritating like adorable monsters. One might think that they were a school of ten-year-old courtesans, seeds of love just budding.

Here we are before the palace of Hadj-Ahmed, which is supposed to be one of the most perfect examples of Arabian architecture. Every traveler has extolled it, compared it to the dwellings of the "Arabian Nights."

There would be nothing remarkable about it were it not for the interior gardens, which give to it a very pretty Oriental effect. It would take a whole volume to relate the misdeeds and crimes of the man who built it with the precious materials stolen and torn from the rich dwellings of the city and its suburbs.

The Arabian quarter of Constantine takes up a half of the town. The sloping streets are even narrower and more tangled than those of Algiers, and they go right down to the edge of the chasm where flows the Oued-Roumel.

Formerly eight bridges crossed this precipice. To-day six of them are in ruins. One single one, of Roman origin, still gives us an idea of what it used to be like. In spots the Roumel disappears under gigantic arches which it has dug for itself. The

bridge was built on one of these. The natural archway through which the river passes is forty-one metres high; it has a thickness of eighteen metres; therefore the foundations of the Roman construction are fifty-nine metres high. The bridge itself was two stories high, having two rows of arches superimposed on the gigantic arch of nature.

To-day a steel bridge of a single span admits one to Constantine.

But it is time for me to leave and start for Bône, a pretty little white city which reminds one of those to be found on the Mediterranean coast of France.

The *Kléber* is getting up steam along the wharf. It is six o'clock. As the steamer leaves the sun is sinking over there behind the desert.

I stay on deck until night with my eyes turned toward the land, which is disappearing behind a crimson cloud, in an apotheosis of the sinking sun, in a haze of golden pink, under the calm stretch of azure sky.





AT LOËCHE

*Diary of the Marquis de Roseveyre*

LOËCHE, *June 12, 1880.*



HAVE been ordered to spend a month at Loëche! Merciful heavens! To think of spending one whole month in this town which is said to be the gloomiest, the deadliest, the most tiresome of all the watering places! What am I saying, a town? It is a hole, scarcely even a village! In short, I have been condemned to a month in the penitentiary!

*June 13.*—I dreamed all night about this frightful trip. I have just one thing left to do. I must take a companion with me! That might help me pass the time. And then this will also give me the chance to find out whether or not I am prepared for married life.

A month in *tête-à-tête* with a woman, just we two, with long talks at any time of day or night! The deuce!

True, it is not as serious to take a woman for a month as to take her for a lifetime, but it is much

more serious than to take her for a shorter time. Of course I could always provide for her and send her away; but then I would be left alone in Loèche, a thing which I would not in the least relish!

The choice will be difficult. I wish neither a coquette nor a fool. I do not wish to be made ridiculous nor to be ashamed of her. I am willing that people should say: "The Marquis de Roseveyre is in luck," but I do not want them to whisper: "That poor Marquis de Roseveyre!" On the whole, I want my temporary companion to have all the qualities which I shall demand of my permanent companion. The only difference there is to be made is the same which exists between a new article and one bought at a bargain. Bah! It is easy enough to find, if one takes the trouble to look!

*June 14.*—Bertha! . . . The very person! Twenty! Twenty, pretty, just graduated from the Conservatoire, waiting for a part, a future star. Good manners, a proud bearing, wit and . . . love! A bargain which can easily pass for a new article.

*June 15.*—She is free! She accepts, having no business or other engagements. I myself ordered her gowns, in order to be sure that she would not look common.

*June 20.*—Basle. She sleeps. I will begin my traveling notes.

She is quite charming. When she met me at the station, I did not recognize her; she looked like a woman of the world. That child certainly has a future ahead of her . . . on the stage.

Her manners seemed entirely changed; her walk, bearing, gestures, smile, voice, everything was irreproachable. Her hair was dressed divinely, in a charming and simple manner, like a woman who no

longer has to attract attention and please every one, but who wishes to be agreeable in a discreet manner to one only. Everything about her showed this. It was so delicately and completely indicated, the change seemed to me so clever and complete that I offered her my arm just as I would have done to my wife. She took it with ease, as though she were really such.

Alone in the train we first sat motionless and silent. Then she lifted her veil and smiled. . . . Nothing more. A well-bred smile. Oh! I feared the embrace, the comedy of tenderness, the eternal and hackneyed game of women of her kind; but she controlled herself. She is very clever. We conversed a little like married people, a little like strangers. She was charming. She often smiled when she looked at me. It was I who now felt like kissing her. But I remained calm.

At the frontier an official covered with braid quickly opened the door, and asked me:

“Your name, Monsieur?”

I was surprised. I answered:

“Marquis de Roseveyre.”

“Where are you going?”

“To the baths at Loèche, in the Valais.”

He wrote all this down, and then continued:

“Is Madame your wife?”

What was to be done? What could I answer? I hesitated and lifted my eyes to her. She was pale and looking out in the distance. . . . I felt that I might shame her needlessly. And then, she was to be my companion for a month.

I answered: “Yes, Monsieur.”

I saw her suddenly blush. I was pleased.

When I arrived here at the hotel the proprietor

held out the register to her. She immediately passed it to me, and I knew that she was watching me write. It was our first evening of intimacy! . . . Once the page turned over, who would read this register? I wrote: "Marquis and Marquise de Roseveyre, on their way to Loèche."

*June 21.*—Basle, 6 a. m. We are leaving for Bern. I have certainly been lucky.

*June 21.*—10 p. m. What a strange day it has been! I am quite moved. How foolish and ridiculous!

During the trip we spoke but little. She had risen early and was tired; she was dozing.

As soon as we reached Bern we wished to see the panorama of the Alps, which I did not know at all; we started out through the town like a new-married couple.

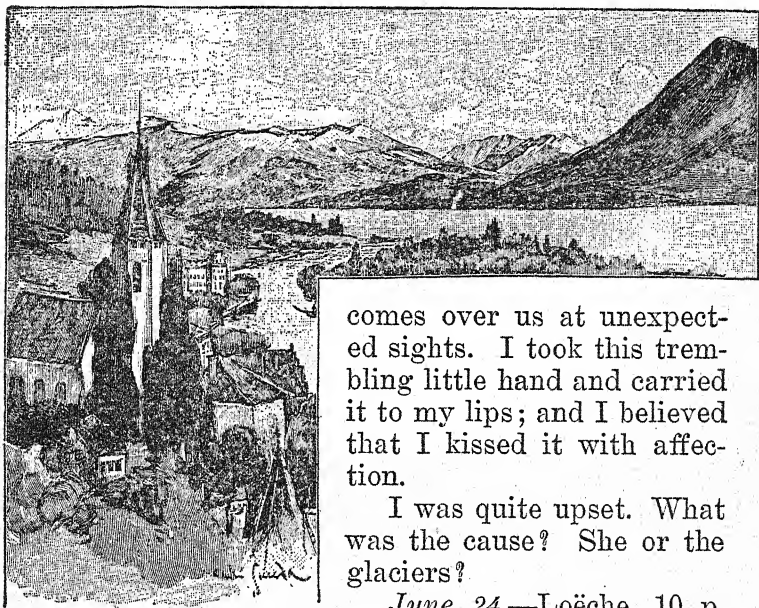
Suddenly we perceived an immense plain, and away over there, far away in the distance, the glaciers. Seen from the distance like that they did not look immense, and yet this view thrilled me. A glorious setting sun was shining down upon us; the heat was intense. Yet those mountains of ice remained cold and white. The Jungfrau, the Virgin, towering over her brothers, with her broad side stretched toward us, and all around her the snow-capped giants raised their heads, seeming ever paler in the dying day, standing out like silver against the azure sky.

Their gigantic and motionless mass gave me the impression of a new and surprising world, of steep regions, dead and frozen, but as fascinating as the sea, full of a mysterious power and seduction. The air which has caressed these ever-frozen heights seemed to come to us across the blossoming country,

different from that of the field. It contained something harsh, strong, and sterile, like the flavor of inaccessible regions.

Bertha, bewildered, was looking on, without pronouncing a word.

Suddenly she took my hand and pressed it. I myself felt a kind of fever, this exaltation which



comes over us at unexpected sights. I took this trembling little hand and carried it to my lips; and I believed that I kissed it with affection.

I was quite upset. What was the cause? She or the glaciers?

*June 24.*—Loèche, 10 p. m. The whole trip was delightful. We spent a half a day at Thun, looking over the delightful outline of the mountains, which we were to cross the following day.

At sunset we crossed the lake, probably the most beautiful one in Switzerland. Mules were waiting for us. We mounted them and started off. We breakfasted in a little town and then began the

ascent of the narrow wooded forge, continually overlooked by high peaks. From time to time, on the slopes which seemed to come down from heaven, we could distinguish little white spots, little Swiss cottages, clinging there, no one knows how. We crossed torrents, and, at times, between two pine-covered peaks we would see an immense pyramid of snow, which looked as though it were near enough to reach in twenty minutes and yet which was at least twenty-four hours distant.

Sometimes we crossed narrow little plains littered with rocks, as though two mountains had clashed in this arena and had left on this battlefield these remains of their granite limbs.

Bertha, exhausted, was sleeping on her animal, occasionally opening her eyes to see where she was. Finally she slept, and I supported her with my arm, happy to feel this contact of her warm body. Night came; we were still climbing. We stopped before the door of a little inn, lost in the mountains.

How we slept that night!

At daybreak I ran to the window, and uttered a cry. Bertha followed me, and we stood there, surprised and delighted. We had slept in the snows.

All about us enormous, barren mountains, whose gray bones showed through their white cloaks, mournful, frozen mountains without a tree, rose so high that that seemed inaccessible.

An hour after starting out we perceived, at the bottom of the funnel of granite and snow, a black, gloomy lake without a ripple, which we followed for a long time. A guide brought us a few edelweiss, the pale flowers of the glaciers. Bertha pinned them to her waist.

Suddenly the rocky gorge opened out before us,



uncovering a wonderful view: the whole stretch of the Piedmontese Alps beyond the valley of the Rhône. High peaks overlooked the lesser heights. There was Mount Rose, solemn and heavy; the Cervin, that straight pyramid where so many men have died; the Dent du Midi, and a hundred other white points, sparkling like diamonds under the white sun.

Suddenly the path which we had been following stopped at the edge of a precipice, and far down, at the bottom of the black hole, seven thousand feet deep, inclosed in four walls of straight, brown, stern rocks, on a field of grass, we noticed a few white specks, like sheep in a field. They were the houses of Loèche.

The road being dangerous, we were forced to dismount from the mules. The path descends along the rock, winding, twisting, and turning, always overlooking the precipice and the village, which grows as we come nearer. This is known as the pass of the Gemmi, one of the most beautiful if not *the* most beautiful of the Alps.

Bertha was leaning on me, uttering little cries of joy and fear, happy and timid as a child. Once, when we were a few feet behind the guide and hidden by an outjutting rock, she kissed me. I held her close. . . .

I had said to myself:

"At Loèche I will take care to let it be understood that I am not with my wife."

But everywhere that we have been I had treated her as such, and she had passed for the Marquise de Roseveyre. At this late date I could scarcely register her under another name. And then, I would have offended her, and really she was charming.



But I said to her:

"My dear, you are bearing my name; I am thought to be your husband; I expect you to act with extreme caution and discretion. Don't make friends, or talk, or gossip. Let people think that you are proud and act so that I may not have to regret the step which I have taken."

She answered:

"Never fear, my little René."

*June 26.*—Loèche is not at all dismal. It is wild, but very beautiful. This wall of rocks seven thousand feet high, from which spring a hundred different torrents like ribbons of silver; this constant noise of rushing water; this village buried in the Alps, from which one looks up to the sun as from the bottom of a deep well; the neighboring glacier, so white in the notch in the mountain, and this valley, full of brooks, full of trees, of freshness and of life, which descends toward the Rhône and shows in the distance the snowy peaks of the Piedmont: all this thrills and charms me. Perhaps . . . if Bertha were not here? . . .

This child is a gem, more reserved and distinguished than any one. I hear people saying:

"That little Marquise is truly charming!" . . .

*June 27.*—First bath. One goes directly from the room to the pool, where twenty bathers, clad in long woolen robes, are already dipping in the water, men and women together. Some eat, some read, some talk. We push before us little floating tables. Sometimes we play tag, which is not entirely proper. Seen from the galleries which surround the bath, we look like enormous toads in a tub. Bertha sat in this gallery and talked to me a little. Everybody looked at her.

*June 28.*—Second bath. I spent four hours in the water. In a week I will spend eight hours there. As co-plungers I have the Prince of Vanoris (Italy), Count Lovenberg (Austria), Baron Samuel Vernhe (Hungary or elsewhere), plus about fifteen persons of less importance, but all noble. In watering-places everybody is noble. One after the other they asked to be introduced to Bertha. I answer: "Yes!" and slip away. They think me jealous; how foolish!

*June 29.*—Consternation! Princess Vanoirs herself came up to me as we were returning to the hotel and asked to meet my wife. I introduced Bertha, but I asked her to avoid this lady as much as possible.

*July 2.*—The Prince collared us yesterday and brought us to his apartments, where all the bathers of note take tea. Bertha was certainly more charming than any of the other women. What can I do?

*July 3.*—After all, I can't help it! Among these thirty noblemen there must be at least ten imaginary ones! Among these sixteen or seventeen women are there more than twelve of them who are really married; and among these twelve are there more than six of them above reproach? So much the worse for them, so much the worse for them! They wished it!

*July 10.*—Bertha is the queen of Loèche! Everybody is wild about her; they adore her and spoil her! She is superb, graceful, and distinguished. Everybody envies me. Princess Vanoris asked me:

"Tell me, Marquis, where did you find that treasure?"

I felt a strong desire to answer:

"First prize at Conservatoire, engaged at the Odéon, free after August 5, 1880!"

Heavens! How she would have looked if I had said that!

*July 20.*—Bertha is truly surprising! Never has she failed to show the proper tact or taste; she is a wonder!

\* \* \* \* \*

*August 10.*—Paris. All is over! I feel sad. The day before our departure I thought that every one would cry.

We had decided to watch the sun rise from the Torrenthorn, then to come back before leaving. We started out on mules toward night. The guides were carrying lanterns. The long cavern straggled along the winding path through the pine forest. Then we crossed through pasture lands, where herds of cows roam around at large. Then we reached the stony region, where even grass no longer grows.

At times, through the darkness, we could distinguish, either to the right or to the left, a white mass, a heap of snow piled up in a crevasse in the mountain.

The cold was becoming biting, stinging the eyes and the skin. The dry wind of the heights was blowing, drying our throats and bringing with it the icy breath of hundreds of snowy peaks.

When we arrived at the summit it was still night. We unpacked all the provisions so that we could drink champagne to the rising sun.

The sky was growing lighter. We could already see a gulf at our feet, and then, a short distance away, another peak.

The whole horizon seemed livid, without our being able to distinguish anything in the distance.

Soon, to the left, we discovered an enormous peak, the Jungfrau, then another, and then another.

They appeared little by little as though rising with the dawning day. We stood there, bewildered at finding ourselves thus surrounded by these giants in this desolate country of eternal snow. Suddenly, opposite us, another endless chain unfolded itself, the Piedmont. Other peaks appeared to the north. This was indeed the immense land of great mountains, with icy brows, from the Rhindenhorn, as massive as its name, to the faint outline of the patriarch of the Alps, the Mont Blanc. Some were straight and proud, others were bent and looked deformed, but all were equally white, as though some god had thrown over the hunchbacked earth a cloth of immaculate whiteness.

Some looked near enough to touch; others were so far away that they could barely be distinguished.

The sky grew red, and all the peaks blushed. They looked as though the clouds had bled upon them. It was superb, awe-inspiring. Soon the flaming color paled and the whole army of peaks gradually grew pink, of a soft and tender pink, like the gowns of a young girl.

The sun appeared above the quilt of snow. Then, suddenly, the whole land of glaciers turned white, of a dazzling white, as though the horizon were full of silver domes.

The women looked on, enraptured. They started as the cork popped from a champagne bottle. Prince de Vanoris offered a glass to Bertha and cried:

"I drink to the health of the Marquise de Roseveyre!"

She stood up on her mule and answered:

"I drink to all my friends!"

Three hours later we took the train for Geneva, in the valley of the Rhône.

As soon as were alone, Bertha, who had been so happy and gay a little while ago, burst out sobbing, her face hidden in her hands. I fell to my knees, asking:

"What is the matter? What is the matter? Tell me, dearie, what is the matter?"

She stammered through her tears:

"It . . . it . . . it's all over, this being respectable!"

At that instant I certainly was on the point of committing a great blunder! . . . I did not.

As soon as we reached Paris I left Bertha. Later on I would not have had the strength of will.

(The diary of the Marquis de Roseveyre shows nothing of interest during the following two years. On July 20, 1883, we find the following lines.)

*July 20, 1883.*—Florence. Sad memories were brought back to me to-day. I was walking in the Cassines when a lady stopped her carriage and called me. It was Princess Vanoris. As soon as I came within speaking distance, she called:

"Oh, Marquis, my dear Marquis, how glad I am to see you! Quick, quick, give me news of the Marquise; she is undoubtedly the most charming woman that I have ever met in all my life!"

I stood there, surprised, not knowing what to say, and with a sad feeling in my heart. I stammered:

"Don't speak of her to me, Princess; I lost her three years ago."

She took my hand, saying:

"Oh! I sympathize with you, my poor friend."

She left me. I walked home, sad and discontented, thinking of Bertha as though we had just parted.

Fate often makes mistakes.

How many respectable women were born to be otherwise, and prove it.

Poor Bertha! How many of the others were born to be respectable. . . . And those . . . more than the others . . . perhaps . . . But . . . I must forget her.



IN BRITTANY

*July, 1882.*



HIS is the season for traveling, the clear season, when one loves new horizons, the vast stretches of blue sea which rest the eye and calm the soul, the fresh, wooded dells, where, for no reason, the heart grows tender. One sits, at sunset, on a bank of velvety grass and watches at one's feet a little pool of quiet water in the rut made by the wheels of passing wagons and where the sinking sun is reflected.

I delight in these walks through a land which one seems to be discovering, the sudden surprise on seeing customs of which one knew nothing, this constant tension of interest, this joy of seeing, this endless awakening of thought.

One thing alone spoils for me these charming explorations: guidebooks. Written by traveling salesmen, they give false descriptions, incorrect information; they indicate imaginary roads, and they are,



with the single exception of an excellent German guide, the comfort of shopkeepers on a pleasure trip to the land of Joan, and the despair of true trampers who go through the land knapsack on back and cane in hand by paths, through ravines and along the beaches.

They lie, they know nothing, they understand nothing with their stupid and emphatic prose. They make the most delightful countries seem ugly; they only know the highways and are worth no more than the so-called military maps, where the dams of the Seine, which were made thirty years ago, have not yet been recorded.

And yet how pleasant it is, when traveling, to know a little in advance the region into which one is venturing! How happy one is when one finds a book in which some sincere wanderer has outlined a few of his impressions! Sometimes it merely gives one a vague idea of the places to be seen; sometimes it gives more. When penetrating into Algeria as far as the oasis of Laghouat one should read every day and hour that admirable book by Fromentin, *A Summer in the Sahara*. This book opens the eyes and mind, it seems to light up these burning plains, mountains and solitudes, it reveals to one the very soul of the desert.

There are everywhere in France delightful spots which are almost unknown. Without intending to write a new guidebook, I would like, nevertheless, to point out a few short excursions, trips of a week or ten days, familiar to all pedestrians, but unknown to all who lead a sedentary life.

Never follow the highways, and always go along the bypaths, sleep in lofts when one does not come to an inn, eat bread and drink water when no other

provisions are at hand, fear neither rain nor distances nor the long hours of regular marches. This is the only way to penetrate into the heart of a country, to discover, right near the towns where all the tourists pass, thousands of things of which one had not the slightest idea.

Brittany is the most curious of all the old provinces of France; one can, in ten days, understand enough of it to grasp its temperament, for every country, like every man, has its peculiarities.

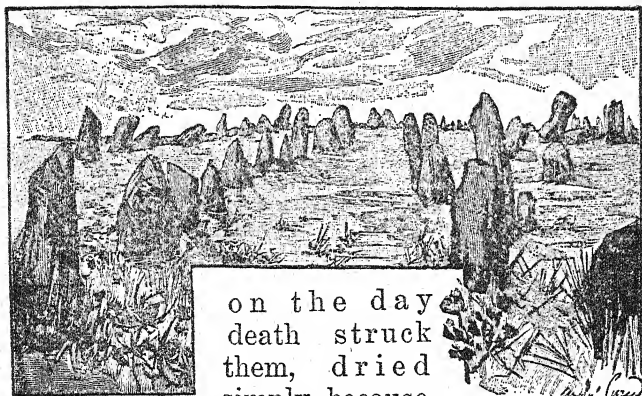
Let us cross it in a few lines. We will follow along the coast from Vannes to Douarmenez, the true Breton coast, solitary and low, strewn with reefs, where the waters always rumble and seem to answer the wind whistling over the moors.

The Morbihan, a kind of inland sea, which rises and descends under the pressure of the tides of the great ocean, stretches before the harbor of Vannes. One must cross it in order to reach the open.

It is full of mysterious, haunted Druidic islands. They are covered with tumuli, dolmens, menhirs, all these strange stones which, in the olden times, were almost looked upon as gods. These little islands, according to the Bretons, are as numerous as the days of the year. The Morbihan is a symbolical sea shaken by superstitions.

Herein lies the great charm of this country; it is a nursery for legends. Dead everywhere else, the old beliefs remain rooted in this granite soil. Old stories are also indestructible in this land; and the peasant will tell you of adventures accomplished fifteen centuries ago, as though they dated from yesterday, as though his father or grandfather had seen them.

There are crypts where the dead stay intact, as



on the day  
death struck  
them, dried  
simply because

the source of the blood had dried up. Thus memories live eternally in this corner of France, and even the manner of thinking of remote ancestors still lives on.

I had left Vannes on the very day of my arrival, in order to visit an historical castle, Sucinio, and from there I expected to go to Locmariaker, Carnac, and then, following along the coast, to Pont-l'Abbé, Penmarch, Pointe du Raz, Douarnenez.

At first the road bordered along the Morbihan, and then cut across an endless heath crossed by a network of ditches full of water and without a house, a tree, a single creature, covered with underbrush, which whistled in the furious wind under the sky full of ragged clouds.

A little farther on I crossed a hamlet, where were wandering around three barefooted, sordid-looking peasants and a tall girl of about twenty, whose legs were covered with dung. Then I came out again on the barren, deserted, swampy heath, which stretched out to the sea, whose gray line, at times lightened by a streak of foam, extended to the horizon.

In the middle of this wild stretch rose a high ruin, a square castle, surrounded by towers, standing there all alone between these two deserts: the heath and the sea.

This old manor of Cucinil, which dates back to the thirteenth century, is far-famed. It is there that was born the great Connétable de Richemont, who reconquered France from the English.

There are no more doors. I entered the vast, solitary courtyard, where the crumbling turrets had made heaps of stones; I climbed up the remnants of stairways, scrambled up broken walls, clinging to vines, loose rocks, anything on which I could lay my hands, and I finally managed to reach the top of one of the towers whence I could look out over Brittany.

Opposite me, behind an uncultivated field, the dirty-looking ocean was thundering under a black sky; everywhere was the heath! Over there, to the right, lay the Morbihan with its ragged coasts, and farther away, barely visible, a white spot, lighted by the sun, indicated the position of Vannes. Still farther away could be seen a large cape: Quiberon!

All this was sad, melancholy, dreary. The wind was whistling over these mournful stretches; I was indeed in the old haunted country; and in the walls, bushes, ditches, I imagined that I could detect the very smell of legends.

The following day I crossed Saint-Gildas, where the ghost of Abelard roams. At Port-Navalo the sailor who ferried me across the straits spoke to me of his father, who was a Chouan, as well as his elder brother and his uncle, the curé; all three of them were killed. . . . And with outstretched hand he pointed to Quimberon.

At Locmariaker I entered the country of the Druids. A Breton showed me Cæsar's table, a monster granite slab upheld by giants; then he spoke to me of Cæsar as of a person whom he might have known.

Finally, still following the coast between the heath and the ocean, from the top of the hill, I saw before me, toward evening, the granite fields of Carnac.

They seem alive, these stones standing in endless rows, giants or pigmies, square, long, flat; they look like long, thin bodies or short, stout ones. When one looks at them steadily they seem to move, to bend, to become infused with life!

One easily gets lost along them. At times a wall interrupts this mass of granite; one climbs over it, and the strange procession begins over again, planted like avenues, spaced like soldiers, as terrifying as apparitions. Your heart beats, and unconsciously your mind goes back to the ages and is lost in superstitious beliefs.

As I was standing motionless, bewildered, and delighted, a sudden noise behind me gave me such a shock that I turned around with a start. A little old man, dressed in black, with a book under his arm, greeted me and said: "So you are visiting our Carnac, Monsieur." I told him of my enthusiasm and of the scare which he had given me. He continued: "Here, Monsieur, there are so many legends in the air that every one is afraid without knowing why. For five years I have been searching among these rocks; almost all of them have a secret, and at times I imagine that they have a soul. When I return to the boulevard I smile at my foolishness; but when I come back to Carnac I am a believer, an

unconscious believer, without any definite religion, but possessing them all." He stamped on the ground, crying: "This is a land of religion; one must never jest with bygone beliefs. We are, Monsieur, among the Druids; let us respect their faith!"

The sun sank behind the sea, leaving the sky crimson, and this light was shed on the great rocks, our neighbors. The old man smiled and said:

"These terrible creeds have such power in this place that I even had a vision here! What am I saying, a vision? A veritable apparition! Over there, on that dolmen, at this same hour one evening, I distinctly saw Korivwen, the sorceress who boiled the miraculous water."

I interrupted him and asked him who this witch Korivwen might be. He was indignant.

"What! You do not know the mother of the god Hu and the mother of the korrigans!"

"No, I must admit that I do not. If it is a legend, tell it to me."

I sat down beside him on a menhir, while he related the following tale:

"The god Hu, father of the Druids, had for wife the sorceress Korivwen. She presented him with three children, Mor-Vrau, Creiz-Viou, a daughter, the most beautiful girl in the world, and Aravik-Du, the most frightful-looking of all creatures.

"Korivwen, in her maternal love, wished at least to leave something to this unfortunate son, and she decided to let him drink the water of divination.

"This water had to boil a year. The enchantress confided the keeping of the vessel which contained it to a blind man named Morda and to the dwarf Gwiou.

"The year was almost over, and the two watch-



ers relaxed a little in their zeal, a small amount of the sacred liquid spilled, and three drops fell on the dwarf's finger; he carried it to his mouth, and immediately knew the future. The vessel then cracked of its own accord, and Korivwen appeared and rushed for Gwiou, who ran away.

"When he saw that he was in danger of being caught he changed himself into a hare, that he might run faster, but immediately the sorceress became a greyhound and sprang after him. She was going to seize him at the edge of a stream, but he suddenly took the form of a fish and jumped into the water. Then an enormous otter appeared, who pursued him so closely that he could only escape by becoming a bird. No sooner had he done this than an immense hawk, with outstretched wings and open beak, descended from the heavens; it was still Korivwen; and Gwiou, trembling with fear, changed himself into a grain of wheat and hid himself among many others.

"Then a big black hen ran up and swallowed him. Korivwen, revenged, was resting, when she noticed that she was once more to become a mother.

"The grain of wheat had sprouted in her. A child was born, and Hu abandoned it on the water in a wicker cradle. But the child was saved by the son of King Gouydno and became a genius, the spirit of the heath, the goblin. Thus it is that from Korivwen descend all these little fantastic beings, dwarfs and gnomes, who haunt these rocks. It is said that they live beneath them, in little holes, and that they come out in the evening to run around through the furze. Stand here for a long time, Monsieur, in the midst of these enchanted monuments; look steadily at some dolmen lying on the ground, and you will



soon hear the earth rumble; you will see the stone move, and you will tremble with fear as you see the head of a korrigan, which is looking at you and lifting the block of granite with his head. Now, let us go to dinner."

Night had come, moonless and black, full of the whisperings of the wind. I was walking with hands stretched out, bumping against these great upright stones; and the story, the country, my thoughts, all had taken such a supernatural tone, that I would not have been in the least surprised suddenly to feel a korrigan slip between my legs.

The following day I started out again, crossing heaths, villages, towns, Lorient, Quimperlé, so pretty in its valley, Quimper.

The road leaves Quimper, goes up a hill, crosses valleys, passes a sort of grassy and mournful-looking lake, and finally penetrates into Pont-l'Abbé, the most Breton little town of all that Breton Brittany which extends from the Morbihan to the Pointe du Raz.

At the entrance, an old castle surrounded by towers dips its walls in a gloomy pond, where the wild birds fly. A little river flows out of here, up which the coasters can come as far as the town. In the narrow streets with the severe-looking houses the men wear the immense broad-brimmed hat, the magnificent embroidered vest, and the four superposed jackets; the first, as large as the hand, barely covering the shoulder blades, and the last stopping halfway between the waist and the knees.

The tall, pretty, fresh girls have their bosoms compressed in a cloth vest, which does not even allow one to perceive their throats. Their hair is dressed in a peculiar manner. Two bands, em-

broidered in different colors, frame the face and hold back the hair, which falls in braids, and is then caught up over the head under a peculiar cap, often woven in gold and silver.

The road again leaves this little mediæval town. It leads toward the furze-dotted heath. From time to time I saw three or four cows grazing by the road, always accompanied by a sheep. For several days I wondered why I never saw cows without a sheep. This question troubled and worried me, became a regular obsession. Finally I looked for a man I could ask. I searched for a long time, roaming around through villages and never meeting a person who could speak French. Finally a priest who was walking along, reading his breviary, informed me politely that this sheep is the wolf's share.

A sheep is worth less than a cow, and as there is no danger in capturing it, the wolf always prefers it. But it often happens that the brave cows form a hollow square, in order to defend their innocent companion, and they receive on the end of their sharp horns the beast in quest of live flesh.

Here is to be found the legendary wolf, which terrifies our childhood, the great white wolf, which all the hunters have seen and which no one has ever killed. He is never seen in the morning. It is toward five o'clock on a winter's evening, just as the sun is setting, that he appears running along on some barren height, outlining his long silhouette against the sky.

Why has no one killed him? Ah, well! This is just a supposition; during the hunt, luncheon begins at about one o'clock and ends at about four. A lot of wine has been consumed, and much has been said about the white wolf. On leaving the table he

is seen. What is there surprising about his not being killed?

I was going straight before me on the road paved with gray granite, which shone in the sunlight. The fields on both sides are dotted with furze. Here and there an enormous stone constantly reminds of the Druids. The wind blows close to the ground, whistling through the thorny bushes. At times a dull roar, like the boom of a distant cannon, makes the earth tremble; for I am approaching Penmarch, where it seems that the sea plunges into sonorous caverns. The waves engulfed in these holes shake the entire coast, and can be heard as far as Quimper on a stormy day.

For a long time, already, I have been able to see the long line of gray breakers, which seemed to dominate this whole low, barren country. Everywhere pointed rocks burst through the waves and show their black heads surrounded by foam, as though they were drooling; right up close to the water a few frail houses are seeking to hide behind a heap of stones in order to avoid the eternal storm and salt rain of the ocean. A large lighthouse, which trembles on its rocky foundation, juts out into the open, and the keepers relate that sometimes during the stormy nights the long granite column pitches like a ship, and that the clock falls downward to the ground and that the objects on the wall are loosened, fall and break.

From here to the Conquet is the country of shipwrecks. It is there that is ambushed the hideous death of the sea—drowning. No other coast is more dangerous, more feared, such a destroyer of men.

At the backs of the little houses of the fishermen one sees, groveling in the mud with the pigs, an old

woman, big girls with bare and dirty legs, and the sons, the oldest of whom is about thirty. The father is almost never to be found there, and very seldom the oldest son. Do not ask where they are, for the old woman would stretch out her arm toward the horizon, where the waves roll and pass as though ready, at any minute, to rush over this land.

But it is not only the treacherous sea that destroys these men. There is an all-powerful and still more perfidious ally which helps it every night in its greed for human flesh—alcohol. The sailors know and admit it. They say: "When the bottle is full you see the reef, but when it is empty you see it no more."

The coast of Penmarch terrifies one. It is here that the wreckers must have attracted ships in danger by tying a lantern to the horns of a cow, which has been hobbled in order to simulate the motions of another vessel.

Here, a little to the right, is a rock which has become famous by a terrible tragedy. The wife of one of the last prefects of the Morbihan was sitting on this stone, holding her little girl in her lap. A few yards below her, the sea seemed calm, inoffensive, asleep. Suddenly one of these strange waves which are known as "tidal waves" came up noiselessly, swollen, irresistible. It climbed the rock like a sneak and carried out two women. Passing coast guards, in the distance, saw only a pink parasol quietly floating on the calm waters, and the great, bare, glistening rock.

For a whole year, lawyers and physicians discussed, argued, pleaded in order to find out which one of the two women, who had been carried away in the same wave, had died the first, mother or

daughter. Cats were drowned with their kittens, dogs with their pups, rabbits with their little ones, in order that there might be no doubt, for a large inheritance was at stake, as the fortune was to go to one or the other of two families, according as the last convulsion was stronger in the large or in the small body.

Almost opposite this sinister spot rises a granite Calvary, such as one often meets in this pious land, where the crosses, so old themselves, are as numerous as their elders, the dolmens. But this Calvary rises over a strange bas-relief, representing in a crude and even vulgar manner the birth of Christ. A passing Englishman admired the naïve sculpture and had it covered over with a roof in order to preserve it from the attacks of this wild climate.

Let us follow along the shore the endless beach along the bay of Audierne. We must either ford or swim across two little rivers, plod along through the sand and seaweed, and keep on between these two solitudes, one moving and the other motionless, the sea and the heath.

Here is Audierne, a gloomy little harbor, which is only enlivened by a few fishing smacks, anchored at the entrance, engaged in sardine fishing.

Before leaving, in the morning, instead of the common coffee, I had a few of these fresh fish, covered with salt, tasty and savory, real violets of the seas. Then I started out toward the Pointe du Raz, this end of the world, this last bit of Europe.

I went up, up, always up, and suddenly I saw two seas, to the left the ocean, to the right the English Channel.

It is here that the current and furious waves meet in battle, wrecking vessels and engulfing men.

O waves, how many sad stories you know,  
Deep, dark, and feared by those waiting at home.

No more trees, nothing but tufts of grass on the great outjutting cape. At the end of it are two lighthouses, and all around are many others, rising up above the reefs. There is one which they have been trying in vain to finish for the last ten years. The furious sea keeps destroying the work of the tireless workers.

Far away in the distance, the sacred island of Sein looks along the horizon, over the harbor of Brest, at its dangerous sister, the island of Ouessant.

“Who sees Ouessant  
Sees his blood,”

say the sailors. The island of Ouessant is the most inaccessible of all, and one which the sailors only approach with dread.

The high promontory ends abruptly, falling straight down into the raging seas. But a little path surrounds it, creeping along the inclined granite, spreading out on the crests not wider than the hand.

Suddenly one finds himself standing on the brink of a fearful abyss with walls as black as ink, which bring back to one the noise of the furious struggle of the waters, which is happening below, deep down at the bottom of this hole, which has been called Hell.

Although standing a hundred yards above the sea, I could feel the spray, and, leaning over the precipice, I contemplated these raging waters, which seemed to be moved by an uncontrollable rage.

It was indeed a hell which no poet had described. I was seized with dread at the thought of men be-



ing thrown down in there, rolling, turning, and plunging about in this storm between four walls, thrown up against the sides, caught again by the waves, engulfed, reappearing, and finally swallowed up by the bubbling, giant waves.

I started out again, haunted by these images, and pushing my way against a heavy wind which was lashing a solitary cape. At the end of about twenty minutes I reached a little village. An old priest, who was reading his breviary behind a stone wall, greeted me. I asked him where I might spend the night, and he offered me the hospitality of his home.

An hour later, we were sitting before his door, talking of this dreary country, which grips the soul, when a little Breton, a child, passed before us, barefooted, his long blond hair flying in the wind. The *curé* called him in his maternal language, and the little urchin, suddenly very shy, came toward us, with his eyes lowered and his hands hanging by his sides.

"He will recite his canticle to you," said the priest; "the little fellow has a wonderful memory, and I expect to make something out of him."

The child began to mumble unknown words in the sing-song tone used by little girls who are saying their piece. He rattled on without any punctuation, running all the syllables together as though the whole were only one word, stopping from time to time for a breath, and then taking up again his hurried recital. Then he was silent. It was all over. The *curé* patted him on the cheek, and said:

"Very well! Now, run along."

The child went his way; then my host added:

"He has just recited to you an old canticle of this land."



I asked:

"An old canticle? Is it known?"

"Not at all. I'll translate it for you if you wish."

Then the old man, in a powerful voice, growing excited as though he were preaching, raising his arm in a threatening manner, recited this Breton canticle, which I took down at his dictation.

"Hell! Hell! O, sinners, do you know what it is?"

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"It is a furnace with a raging fire, beside which the fire of a forge, which reddens the bricks of an oven, is nothing but smoke!"

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"Light is never seen there! Fire burns like fever, invisible! Hope never enters there, for the wrath of God has sealed the door!"

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"Fire on your heads, fire all about you! Are you hungry? Eat fire! Are you thirsty? Drink from this river of molten brimstone!"

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"You will cry through Eternity; your tears will make a sea, and this sea will not be a drop of water for Hell! Your tears shall nourish the flames instead of putting them out; and you will feel the marrow burning in your bones."

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"And then your heads will be cut off above your shoulders, and yet you will live! The demons will toss your pieces to each other, and yet you will live! They will roast your flesh on braziers; you will feel your flesh turn to coals; and yet you will live!"

"And there, there will still be other torches. You will hear reproaches, maledictions, and curses.

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"The father will say to his son: 'Curses be upon you, son of my flesh, for it is for your sake that I wished to amass money by theft!'

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"And the son will answer: 'Curses! Curses be upon you, my father; for it is you who gave me my pride, which led me here!'

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"And the daughter will say to her mother: 'A thousand curses on you, my mother, a thousand curses on you, den of impurities, for you left me free, and I turned away from God!'

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"And the mother will no longer recognize her children; and she will answer: 'Curses on my daughters and on my sons, curses on the sons of my daughters and on the daughters of my sons!'

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"And these cries will resound throughout Eternity. And these tortures will always be. And this fire . . . this fire! . . . it is the wrath of God who lighted this fire! . . . it will burn forever without diminishing, without smoke, never penetrating less deeply than the marrow of your bones.

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"Eternity! . . . Woe! . . . Never to cease dying, never to cease drowning in an ocean of suffering.

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"O '*Never*'! you are a word faster than the ocean! O '*Never*'! you are full of cries, of tears, and of anger! '*Never*'! Oh, you are harsh. Oh! you terrify me!"

When the old priest had finished he asked me:  
“Is that not terrible?”

Over there, in the distance, we could hear the tireless wave beating against the gloomy cliff. I once more saw this hole full of angry foam, dismal and roaring, the true home of Death; and something of the mystic fear which makes repenting sinners tremble was weighing on my soul.

I started out again at sunrise, expecting to reach Douarnenez before nightfall.

A man, who spoke French and who had traveled for fourteen years in the service of government ships, came up to me as I was looking for the coast-guard path, and we went down together toward the Baie des Trépassés, of which the Pointe du Raz is a part.

It is an immense semicircle of sand, of an unforgettable melancholy, of a disquieting sadness, giving one, after a short time, the desire to pass by. A barren valley with a mournful pond, without any reeds, a pond which seems dead, reaches down to this frightful beach. It seems, indeed, to be an antechamber to the infernal regions. The yellow sand, dreary and flat, stretches out as far as the enormous granite rock which faces the Pointe du Raz, and where break the furious waves.

In the distance we saw three men standing motionless in the sand, like stakes. My companion seemed surprised, for no one ever came to this deserted spot. But on coming near, we noticed something long, stretched out near them, as though buried in the sand; at times they would lean down and touch it and then stand up again.

It was the corpse of a drowned sailor from Douarnenez, lost the preceding week, with his four

comrades. For a week they had been waiting in this place, where the current throws up the bodies. He was the first to come to this last meeting-place.

But something was occupying my guide's mind, for drowned people are not rare in this country. He took me toward the gloomy pond, and, making me lean over the water, he showed me the walls of the town of Ys. All that was visible was a bit of ancient masonry. Then I took a drink from a tiny stream of water at the best spring in the country, as he claimed. Finally he told me the story of the vanished city, as though the event were still recent and had happened, at the earliest, at the time of his grandfather.

A good but weak-minded king had a daughter, who was very perverse and beautiful, so beautiful that all the men went mad at the sight of her, so perverse that she gave herself to all, then had them killed by throwing them into the sea from the top of the neighboring rocks.

It is said that her unruly passions were more violent than the furious waves of the ocean and more unappeasable. Her body seemed to be a furnace where the souls burned which Satan then plucked.

God wearied of this lust and informed an old saint, who was living in the neighborhood, of his plans. The saint warned the king, who did not dare to punish and imprison his darling daughter, but who informed her of God's warning. She paid no heed to it and gave herself up to such debauchery that the whole town imitated her, and became a city of love, from which all modesty and virtue disappeared.

One night God awoke the saint and announced to

him that the hour of vengeance had come. The saint ran to the king, who alone had remained virtuous in this country. The king had his horse saddled, and offered one to the saint, who accepted it. A great noise frightened them, and they saw the sea coming toward them, bounding and roaring across the country. Then the king's daughter appeared in her window, crying: "Father, are you going to let me die thus?" And the king took her across his horse and fled through one of the gates of the town just as the water was entering through the other.

They galloped through the night, but the waves followed them with a terrible rumbling and grumbling. Already their foam was lapping the horses' hoofs, and the old saint said to the king: "Sire, cast your daughter from your horse, or else you are lost." And his daughter cried: "Father, father, do not desert me!" But the saint stood up in his stirrups, and, in a voice like thunder, he announced: "It is the will of God!" Then the king thrust away from him his daughter, who was clinging to him. She fell in back of him; the waves immediately swallowed her and then receded.

And the dismal pond which covers these ruins is the water, which has remained there since the destruction of the impure city.

This legend is a story of Sodom, arranged for the use of ladies.

This event, which is related as though it had happened yesterday, occurred, it seems, in the fourth century after the coming of Christ.

I reached Douarnenez in the evening. This is a little fishing town, which would be the most famous bathing resort in France if it were less isolated.

The harbor is what makes its gracefulness and

charm. It lies in the hollow and seems to watch the gentle, long coast, undulating, rounding, always curving delightfully, and whose distant crests are bathed in this light, transparent, blue and white haze, which floats over the sea.

The following day I left for Quimper, and I spent the night at Brest, in order, at daybreak, to take the train to Paris.



#### THE CREUSOT IRON-WORKS



THE sky is blue, perfectly blue, full of sunlight. The train has just passed Montchanin. Over there, in front of us, rises a black, opaque cloud, which seems to come from the earth and obscure the azure clearness of the day, a heavy, motionless cloud. It is smoke from the Creusot iron works. As we come nearer we begin to distinguish objects. A hundred giant chimneys are belching forth clouds of smoke, other smaller ones pant and spit forth streams of steam. All this mingles, spreads, covers the town, fills the streets, hides the sky, extinguishes the sun. It is almost dark now. Coal dust is flying around, it stings the eyes, spots the skin, and spoils the clothes. The houses are as black as though they had been rubbed with soot, the sidewalk is black, the windows are powdered with coal-dust. An odor of chimneys, of tar, of coal is everywhere, contracts the throat,



oppresses the lungs; sometimes an acrid taste of iron, of the forge, of burning metal, of an inferno of fire stops the breath and makes one look up in search of the pure, free, healthy air of the open sky; but up there one sees a thick and heavy cloud, and near by thousands of little specks of coal drifting about.

These are the Creusot iron-works.

A muffled and continuous sound shakes the earth, a sound made up of a thousand different noises, which is sometimes interrupted by a terrific shock which shakes the entire city.

Let us enter the factory of Messrs. Schneider.

What a fairy-land! This is the kingdom of Iron, where reigns his majesty Fire!

One sees fire everywhere. Immense buildings stretch out as far as the eye can see, as high as mountains, and filled to the top with machines which turn, fall, rise, cross, tremble, roar, whistle, grind, creak. All these work by fire.

Here are braziers, over there are leaping flames, farther away blocks of red-hot iron are going in and coming out of the furnaces, passing through the gearing wheels, changing shapes, always red-hot. This ravenous machinery eats up the fire for this glowing iron, which it crushes, cuts, saws, flattens, spins, twists, making out of it locomotives, vessels, cannons, thousands of different things, as fine as the chiseled work of artists, as ponderous as the works of giants, complicated, delicate, brutal, powerful.

Let us try to see and to understand.

To the right we enter into a vast gallery, where four tremendous machines are operating. They work slowly, moving their wheels, their pistons, their rods. What are they doing? They are simply

blowing up air to the tall furnaces where boils the fusing metal. These are the gigantic lungs of the monstrous crucibles. They breath, nothing more; and you pant as though in a sweating-room.

Here are the crucibles; there are two of them, at either extremity of another gallery, as large as towers, roaring and spitting such flames that, a hundred yards away, the eyes are blinded, the skin parched, and you pant as though in a sweating room.

One might think one's self in a raging volcano. The fire which comes from the mouths is white, unbearable to the sight, and it is projected with such force and noise that nothing can describe it.

In there the steel is boiling, the Bessemer steel of which rails are made. A strong man, good-looking, young, serious, his head covered with a large black felt hat, is attentively watching this roaring fire. He is sitting before a wheel like that of a ship, and at times he turns it like a pilot. Immediately the anger of the crucible grows, it spits out a hurricane of flames; it is the chief foundryman who has just increased the enormous current of air which goes through it.

And, still like a ship's captain, the man constantly carries to his eyes what looks like a marine glass, in order to observe the color of the fire. He makes a motion; a little wagon moves forward and dumps other metals into the roaring brazier. The melter again observes the shade of the furious flames, looking for signs, and, suddenly, he turns another very small wheel, which shakes the enormous vat. It slowly turns over, sputtering out a terrific jet of sparks, which reach to the ceiling; and, as delicately as an elephant trying to curtsy, it pours out a few drops of a flaming liquid into a

mould which is held out to it, then, roaring, it straightens out.

A man carries this fire away. It is now a red ingot, which is placed under a steam hammer. The hammer strikes, crushes, and flattens the hot metal into thin sheets, which are immediately cooled in water. It is then seized with a pair of tongs and broken; the foreman examines the grain before giving out the order: "Cast!"

Then the crucible once more turns over, and, like a valet filling glasses around a table, it pours the molten stream of steel which is carrying into a series of moulds placed around it.

It seems to move simply, of its own accord, as though impelled by a soul. For all that it is necessary to do to move these fantastic engines, to make them accomplish their work, to make them come, go, fall, rise, turn, is simply to touch a lever as large as a cane, or to press a button like that of an electric bell.

We go out with our faces burning and our eyes watering.

Here are two brick towers, in the open air, too high to be held under a roof. An unbearable heat escapes from them. A man armed with a crowbar strikes at the bottom, knocks off a kind of blaze, digs down farther. Soon a light appears, a bright spot. Two more blows and a stream, a torrent of fire, rushes through the channels dug into the earth. This is the cast iron. One feels choked before this frightful stream; one runs away and enters the high buildings where locomotives and the great machines for battleships are made.

One can distinguish nothing; all is confusion. It is a regular labyrinth of handles, wheels, belts, mov-

ing gears. At each step one finds one's self before some monster working on red-hot or on cold iron. Here there are saws which are dividing slabs as large as the body; over there we see points penetrating blocks of cast iron and going through them with as much ease as a needle pierces a piece of cloth; farther on, another instrument is cutting sheets of steel, just as scissors would cut a sheet of paper. All this works together with different motions, a fantastic people of wicked, grumbling beasts. There is always fire under the hammers, fire under the furnaces, fire everywhere. And, above all, dominating the noise of the wheels, of the boilers, of the anvils, of all kinds of machinery, a formidable shock makes the earth tremble. It is the great Creusot stamp at work.

It stands at the end of an immense building, which contains ten or twelve others. All fall regularly on an incandescent block, which throws out a rain of sparks, and little by little flattens out and takes any shape which the men wish.

The big one, which weighs over two hundred thousand pounds, falls as might a mountain on a piece of red-hot steel even larger than itself. At each stroke a hail of fire scatters on all sides, and one sees the mass of metal on which the monster is working gradually thinning out.

It rises and falls with a graceful ease, moved by a man who gently touches a frail lever; and it makes one think of the fairy-tales which tell of the frightful animals conquered by children.

We now enter the gallery where are the rolling mills. This is an even stranger sight. Red serpents run along the ground, some as thin as strings, others as large as cables. They look like enormous earth

worms and terrible boa-constrictors. For it is here that wires and rails are made.

Men with their eyes covered by metallic shades, their hands, arms, and legs wrapped in leather, throw into the open jaws of the machines the eternal glowing iron. The machine seizes it, stretches it, lengthens it, draws it out, repeats this operation, always making it thinner. The iron twists like a wounded reptile, seems to resist, but gives in and stretches out indefinitely.

Here are the rails. Powerless to resist, this red, opaque and square mass of Bessemer stretches out under the effort of the machine, and in a few seconds becomes a rail. A giant saw cuts it at the exact length, others follow it without stopping, and thus the gigantic work continues.

At last we leave, as black as the stokers themselves, worn out, blinded. Over our head stretches the heavy cloud of coal and smoke, which is rising to the heavens.

Oh! for a few flowers, a field, a brook and some grass, where one could sleep without thinking and without any other noise about one than the trickling of the water and the distant crowing of the cock!



## FRANCESCA AND CARLOTTA RONDOLI



SET out to see Italy thoroughly on two occasions, and each time I was stopped at the frontier and could not get any further. So I do not know Italy (said my friend, Charles Jouvent). And yet my two attempts gave me a charming idea of the manners of that beautiful country. Some time, however, I must visit its cities, as well as the museums and works of art with which it abounds. I will make another attempt to penetrate into the interior, which I have not yet succeeded in doing.

You don't understand me, so I will explain: In the spring of 1874 I was seized with an irresistible desire to see Venice, Florence, Rome, and Naples. I am, as you know, not a great traveler; it appears to me a useless and fatiguing business. Nights spent in a train, the disturbed slumbers of the railway carriage, with the attendant headache, and stiffness in every limb, the sudden waking in that rolling box, the unwashed feeling, with your eyes and hair full of dust, the smell of the coal on which one's lungs



feed, those bad dinners, in the draughty refreshment rooms are, according to my ideas, a horrible way of beginning a pleasure trip.

After this introduction, we have the miseries of the hotel; of some great hotel full of people, and yet so empty; the strange room and the doubtful bed! I am most particular about my bed; it is the sanctuary of life. We entrust our almost naked and fatigued bodies to it so that they may be reanimated by reposing between soft sheets and feathers.

There we find the most delightful hours of our existence, the hours of love and of sleep. The bed is sacred, and should be respected, venerated, and loved by us as the best and most delightful of our earthly possessions.

I cannot lift up the sheets of a hotel bed without a shudder of disgust. Who has occupied it the night before? Perhaps dirty, revolting people have slept in it. I begin, then, to think of all the horrible people with whom one rubs shoulders every day, people with suspicious-looking skin which makes one think of the feet and all the rest! I call to mind those who carry about with them the sickening smell of garlic or of humanity. I think of those who are deformed and unhealthy, of the perspiration emanating from the sick, and of everything that is ugly and filthy in man.

And all this, perhaps, in the bed in which I am about to sleep! The mere idea of it makes me feel ill as I get into it.

And then the hotel dinners—those dreary *table d'hôte* dinners in the midst of all sorts of extraordinary people, or else those terrible solitary dinners at a small table in a restaurant, feebly lighted by a wretched composite candle under a shade.



Again, those terribly dull evenings in some unknown town! Do you know anything more wretched than the approach of dusk on such an occasion? One goes about as if almost in a dream, looking at faces that one never has seen before and never will see again; listening to people talking about matters which are quite indifferent to you in a language that perhaps you do not understand. You have a horrible feeling, almost as if you were lost, and you continue to walk on so as not to be obliged to return to the hotel, where you would feel more lost still because you are *at home*, in a home which belongs to anyone who can pay for it; and at last you sink into a chair of some well-lighted café, whose gilding and lights oppress you a thousand times more than the shadows in the streets. Then you feel so abominably lonely sitting in front of the glass of flat bock beer that a kind of madness seizes you, the longing to go somewhere or other, no matter where, as long as you need not remain in front of that marble table amid those dazzling lights.

And then, suddenly, you are aware that you are really alone in the world, always and everywhere, and that in places which we know the familiar jostlings give us the illusion only of human fraternity. At such moments of self-abandonment and somber isolation in distant cities one thinks broadly, clearly, and profoundly. Then one suddenly sees the whole of life outside the vision of eternal hope, apart from the deceptions of our innate habits, and of our expectations of happiness, which we indulge in dreams never to be realized.

It is only by going a long distance from home that we can fully understand how short-lived and empty everything near at hand is; by searching for

the unknown we perceive how commonplace and evanescent everything is; only by wandering over the face of the earth can we understand how small the world is, and how very much alike it is everywhere.

How well I know, and how I hate and almost fear, those haphazard walks through unknown streets; and this was the reason why, as nothing would induce me to undertake a tour in Italy by myself, I made up my mind to accompany my friend Paul Pavilly.

You know Paul, and how he idealizes women. To him the earth is habitable only because they are there; the sun gives light and is warm because it shines upon them; the air is soft and balmy because it blows upon their skin and ruffles the soft hair on their temples; and the moon is charming because it makes them dream and imparts a languorous charm to love. Every act and action of Paul's has woman for its motive; all his thoughts, all his efforts and hopes are centered in them.

When I mentioned Italy to Paul he at first absolutely refused to leave Paris. I, however, began to tell him of the adventures I had on my travels. I assured him that all Italian women are charming, and I made him hope for the most refined pleasures at Naples, thanks to certain letters of introduction which I had; and so at last he allowed himself to be persuaded.

## II

WE took the express one Thursday evening, Paul and I. Hardly anyone goes south at that time of the year, so that we had the carriage to ourselves, and both of us were in a bad temper on leaving

Paris, sorry for having yielded to the temptation of this journey, and regretting Marly, the Seine, and our lazy boating excursions, and all those pleasures in and near Paris which are so dear to every true Parisian.

As soon as the train started Paul stuck himself in his corner, and said, "It is most idiotic to go all that distance," and as it was too late for him to change his mind then, I said, "Well, you should not have come."

He made no answer, and I felt very much inclined to laugh when I saw how furious he looked. He is certainly always rather like a squirrel, but then every one of us has retained the type of some animal or other as the mark of his primitive origin. How many people have jaws like a bull-dog, or heads like goats, rabbits, foxes, horses, or oxen. Paul is a squirrel turned into a man. He has its bright, quick eyes, its hair, its pointed nose, its small, fine, supple, active body, and a certain mysterious resemblance in his general bearing: in fact, a similarity of movement, of gesture, and of bearing which might almost be taken for a recollection.

At last we both went to sleep with that uncomfortable slumber of the railway carriage, which is interrupted by horrible cramps in the arms and neck, and by the sudden stoppages of the train.

We woke up as we were passing beside Rhône. Soon the continued noise of crickets came in through the window, that cry which seems to be the voice of the warm earth, the song of Provence; and seemed to instil into our looks, our breasts, and our souls the light and happy feeling of the South, that odor of the parched earth, of the stony and light soil of the olive with its gray-green foliage.

When the train stopped again a railway guard ran along the train calling out "Valence" in a sonorous voice, with an accent that again gave us a taste of that Provence which the shrill note of the crickets had already imparted to us.

Nothing fresh happened till we reached Marseilles, where we alighted for breakfast, but when we returned to our carriage we found a woman installed there.

Paul, with a delighted glance at me, gave his short mustache a mechanical twirl, and passed his fingers through his hair, which had become slightly out of order with the night's journey. Then he sat down opposite the new-comer.

Whenever I happen to see a striking new face, either in traveling or in society, I always have the strongest inclination to find out what character, mind, and intellectual capacities are hidden beneath those features.

She was a young and pretty woman, certainly a native of the south of France, with splendid eyes, beautiful wavy black hair, which was so thick, long, and strong that it seemed almost too heavy for her head. She was dressed with a certain southern bad taste which made her look a little vulgar. Her regular features had none of the grace and finish of the refined races, of that slight delicacy which members of the aristocracy inherit from their birth, and which is the hereditary mark of thinner blood.

Her bracelets were too big to be of gold; she wore earrings with large white stones that were certainly not diamonds, and she belonged unmistakably to the commonalty. One would have guessed that she would talk too loud, and shout on every occasion with exaggerated gestures.

When the train started she remained motionless in her place, in the attitude of a woman who was indignant, without even looking at us.

Paul began to talk to me, evidently with an eye to effect, trying to attract her attention, as shopkeepers expose their choice wares to catch the notice of passers-by.

She, however, did not appear to be paying the least attention.

"Toulon! Ten minutes to wait! Refreshment room!" the porters shouted.

Paul motioned to me to get out, and as soon as we had done so, he said:

"I wonder who on earth she can be?"

I began to laugh. "I am sure I don't know, and I don't in the least care."

He was quite excited.

"She is an uncommonly fresh and pretty girl. What eyes she has, and how cross she looks! She must have been dreadfully worried, for she takes no notice of anything."

"You will have all your trouble for nothing," I growled.

He began to lose his temper.

"I am not taking any trouble, my dear fellow. I think her an extremely pretty woman, that is all. If one could only speak to her! But I don't know how to begin. Cannot you give me an idea? Can't you guess who she is?"

"Upon my word, I cannot. However, I should rather think she is some strolling actress who is going to rejoin her company after a love adventure."

He seemed quite upset, as if I had said something insulting.

"What makes you think that? On the contrary, I think she looks most respectable."

"Just look at her bracelets," I said, "her earrings and her whole dress. I should not be the least surprised if she were a dancer or a circus rider, but most likely a dancer. Her whole style smacks very much of the theater."

He evidently did not like the idea.

"She is much too young, I am sure; why, she is hardly twenty."

"Well," I replied, "there are many things which one can do before one is twenty; dancing and elocution are among them."

"Take your seats for Nice, Vintimiglia," the guards and porters called.

We got in; our fellow passenger was eating an orange, and certainly she did not do it elegantly. She had spread her pocket handkerchief on her knees, and the way in which she tore off the peel and opened her mouth to put in the pieces, and then spat the pips out of the open window, showed that her early training and habits certainly had been decidedly vulgar.

She seemed, also, more put out than ever, and swallowed the fruit with an exceedingly comic air of rage.

Paul devoured her with his eyes, and tried to attract her attention and excite her curiosity; but in spite of his talk, and of the manner in which he brought in well-known names, she did not pay the least attention to him.

After passing Fréjus and St. Raphael, the train passed through a veritable garden, a paradise of roses, and groves of oranges and lemons covered with fruit and flowers at the same time. That de-



lightful coast from Marseilles to Genoa is a kingdom of perfumes in a home of flowers.

June is the time to see it in all its beauty, when in every narrow valley and on every slope, the most exquisite flowers are growing luxuriantly. And the roses! fields, hedges, groves of roses. They climb up the walls, blossom on the roofs, hang from the trees, peep out from amongst the bushes; they are white, red, yellow, large and small, single, with a simple self-colored dress, or full and heavy in brilliant toilettes.

Their breath makes the air heavy and relaxing, and the still more penetrating odor of the orange blossoms sweetens the atmosphere till it might almost be called the refinement of odor.

The shore, with its brown rocks, was bathed by the motionless Mediterranean. The hot summer sun stretched like a fiery cloth over the mountains, over the long expanses of sand, and over the motionless, apparently solid blue sea. The train went on through the tunnels, along the slopes, above the water, on straight, wall-like viaducts, and a soft, vague, saltish smell, a smell of drying seaweed, mingled at times with the strong, heavy perfume of the flowers.

But Paul neither saw, looked at, nor smelled anything, for our fellow traveler engrossed all his attention.

When we reached Cannes, as he wished to speak to me he signed to me to get out, and as soon as I did so he took me by the arm.

"Do you know, she is really charming. Just look at her eyes; and I never saw anything like her hair."

"Don't excite yourself," I replied, "or else ad-



dress her, if you have any intentions that way. She does not look unapproachable, I fancy, although she appears to be a little bit grumpy."

"Why don't you speak to her?" he said.

"I don't know what to say, for I am always terribly stupid at first; I can never make advances to a woman in the street. I follow them, go round and round them, and quite close to them, but never know what to say at first. I only once tried to enter into conversation with a woman in that way. As I clearly saw that she was waiting for me to make overtures, and as I felt bound to say something, I stammered out, 'I hope you are quite well, Madame?' She laughed in my face, and I made my escape."

I promised Paul to do all I could to bring about a conversation, and when we had taken our places again, I politely asked our neighbor:

"Have you any objection to the smell of tobacco, Madame?"

She merely replied, "*Non capisco.*"

So she was an Italian! I felt an absurd inclination to laugh. As Paul did not understand a word of that language, I was obliged to act as his interpreter, so I said in Italian:

"I asked you, Madame, whether you had any objection to tobacco smoke?"

With an angry look she replied, "*Che mi fa?*"

She had neither turned her head nor looked at me, and I really did not know whether to take this "What does it matter to me" for an authorization, a refusal, a real sign of indifference, or for a mere "Let me alone."

"Madame," I replied, "if you mind the smell of tobacco in the least——"

She again said, "*Mica,*" in a tone which seemed

to mean, "I wish to goodness you would leave me alone!" It was, however, a kind of permission, so I said to Paul:

"You may smoke."

He looked at me in that curious sort of way that people have when they try to understand others who are talking in a strange language before them, and asked me:

"What did you say to her?"

"I asked whether we might smoke, and she said we might do whatever we liked."

Whereupon I lighted my cigar.

"Did she not say anything more?"

"If you had counted her words you would have noticed that she used exactly six, two of which gave me to understand that she knew no French, so four remained, and much can be said in four words."

Paul seemed quite unhappy, disappointed, and at sea, so to speak.

But suddenly the Italian asked me, in that tone of discontent which seemed habitual to her, "Do you know at what time we shall get to Genoa?"

"At eleven o'clock," I replied. Then after a moment I went on:

"My friend and I are also going to Genoa, and if we can be of any service to you, we shall be very happy, as you are quite alone." But she interrupted with such a "*Mica!*" that I did not venture on another word.

"What did she say?" Paul asked.

"She said she thought you were charming."

But he was in no humor for joking, and begged me dryly not to make fun of him; so I translated her question and my polite offer, which had been so rudely rejected.

Then he really became as restless as a caged squirrel.

"If we only knew," he said, "what hotel she was going to, we would go to the same. Try to find out, so as to have another opportunity to make her talk."

It was not particularly easy, and I did not know what pretext to invent, desirous as I was to make the acquaintance of this unapproachable person.

We passed Nice, Monaco, Mentone, and the train stopped at the frontier for the examination of luggage.

Although I hate those ill-bred people who breakfast and dine in railway-carriages, I went and bought a quantity of good things to make one last attack on her by their means. I felt sure that this girl must, ordinarily, be by no means inaccessible. Something had put her out and made her irritable, but very little would suffice, a mere word or some agreeable offer, to decide her and vanquish her.

We started again, and we three were still alone. I spread my eatables on the seat. I cut up the fowl, put the slices of ham neatly on a piece of paper, and then carefully laid out our dessert, strawberries, plums, cherries, and cakes, close to the girl.

When she saw that we were about to eat she took a piece of chocolate and two little crisp cakes out of her pocket and began to munch them.

"Ask her to have some of ours," Paul said in a whisper.

"That is exactly what I wish to do, but it is rather a difficult matter."

As she, however, glanced from time to time at our provisions, I felt sure that she would still be hungry when she had finished what she had with her;

so, as soon as her frugal meal was over, I said to her:

"It would be very kind of you if you would take some of this fruit."

Again she said "*Mica!*" but less crossly than before.

"Well, then," I said, "may I offer you a little wine? I see you have not drunk anything. It is Italian wine, and as we are now in your own country, we should be very pleased to see such a pretty Italian mouth accept the offer of its French neighbors."

She shook her head slightly, evidently wishing to refuse, but very desirous of accepting, and her *mica* this time was almost polite. I took the flask, which was covered with straw in the Italian fashion, and filling the glass I offered it to her.

"Please drink it," I said, "to bid us welcome to your country."

She took the glass with her usual look, and emptied it at a draught, like a woman consumed with thirst, and then gave it back to me without even saying "Thank you."

I then offered her the cherries. "Please take some," I said; "we shall be so delighted if you will."

Out of her corner she looked at all the fruit spread out beside her, and said so rapidly that I could scarcely follow her: "*A me non piacciono ne le ciriegie ne le susine; amo soltanto le fragole.*"

"What does she say?" Paul asked.

"That she does not care for cherries or plums, but only for strawberries."

I put a newspaper full of wild strawberries on her lap, and she ate them quickly, tossing them into

her mouth from some distance in a coquettish and charming manner.

When she had finished the little red heap, which soon disappeared under the rapid action of her hands, I asked her:

“What may I offer you now?”

“I will take a little chicken,” she replied.

She certainly devoured half of it, tearing it to pieces with the rapid movements of her jaws like some carnivorous animal. Then she made up her mind to have some cherries, which she “did not like,” and then some plums, then some little cakes. Then she said, “I have had enough,” and sat back in her corner.

I was much amused, and tried to make her eat more, insisting, in fact, till she suddenly flew into a rage, and flung such a furious *mica* at me, that I would no longer run the risk of spoiling her digestion.

I turned to my friend. “My poor Paul,” I said, “I am very much afraid we have had our trouble for nothing.”

The night came on, one of those hot summer nights which extend their warm shade over the burning and exhausted earth. Here and there, in the distance, by the sea, on capes and promontories, bright stars, which I was, at times, almost inclined to confound with lighthouses, began to shine on the dark horizon.

The scent of the orange trees became more penetrating, and we breathed with delight, distending our lungs to inhale it more deeply. The balmy air was soft, delicious, almost divine.

Suddenly I noticed something like a shower of stars under the dense shade of the trees along the

line, where it was quite dark. It might have been taken for drops of light, leaping, flying, playing and running amongst the leaves, or for small stars fallen from the skies in order to have an excursion on the earth; but they were only fireflies dancing a strange fiery ballet in the perfumed air.

One of them happened to come into our carriage, and shed its intermittent light, which seemed to be extinguished one moment and to be burning the next. I covered the carriage-lamp with its blue shade and watched the strange fly careering about in its fiery flight. Suddenly it settled on the dark hair of our neighbor, who was half dozing after dinner. Paul seemed delighted, with his eyes fixed on the bright, sparkling spot, which looked like a living jewel on the forehead of the sleeping woman.

The Italian woke up about eleven o'clock, with the bright insect still in her hair. When I saw her move, I said: "We are just getting to Genoa, Madame," and she murmured, without answering me, as if possessed by some obstinate and embarrassing thought:

"What am I going to do, I wonder?"

And then she suddenly asked:

"Would you like me to come with you?"

I was so taken aback that I really did not understand her.

"With us? How do you mean?"

She repeated, looking more and more furious:

"Would you like me to be your guide now, as soon as we get out of the train?"

"I am quite willing; but where do you want to go?"

She shrugged her shoulders with an air of supreme indifference.

"Wherever you like; what does it matter to me?" She repeated her "*Che mi fa?*" twice.

"But we are going to the hotel."

"Very well, let us all go to the hotel," she said, in a contemptuous voice.

I turned to Paul, and said:

"She wishes to know whether we should like her to come with us."

My friend's utter surprise restored my self-possession. He stammered:

"With us? Where to? What for? How?"

"I don't know, but she made this strange proposal to me in a most irritated voice. I told her that we were going to the hotel, and she said: 'Very well, let us all go there!' I suppose she is without a penny. She certainly has a very strange way of making acquaintances."

Paul, who was very much excited, exclaimed:

"I am quite agreeable. Tell her that we will go wherever she likes." Then, after a moment's hesitation, he said uneasily:

"We must know, however, with whom she wishes to go—with you or with me?"

I turned to the Italian, who did not even seem to be listening to us, and said:

"We shall be very happy to have you with us, but my friend wishes to know whether you will take my arm or his?"

She opened her black eyes wide with vague surprise, and said, "*Che mi fa?*"

I was obliged to explain myself. "In Italy, I believe, when a man looks after a woman, fulfils all her wishes, and satisfies all her caprices, he is called a *patito*. Which of us two will you take for your *patito*?"



Without the slightest hesitation she replied:

"You!"

I turned to Paul. "You see, my friend, she chooses me; you have no chance."

"All the better for you," he replied, in a rage. Then, after thinking for a few moments, he went on:

"Do you really care about taking this creature with you? She will spoil our journey. What are we to do with this woman, who looks like I don't know what? They will not take us in at any decent hotel."

I, however, just began to find the Italian much nicer than I had thought her at first, and I was now very desirous to take her with us. The idea delighted me.

I replied, "My dear fellow, we have accepted, and it is too late to recede. You were the first to advise me to say 'Yes.'"

"It is very stupid," he growled, "but do as you please."

The train whistled, slackened speed, and we ran into the station.

I got out of the carriage, and offered my new companion my hand. She jumped out lightly, and I gave her my arm, which she took with an air of seeming repugnance. As soon as we had claimed our luggage we set off into the town, Paul walking in utter silence.

"To what hotel shall we go?" I asked him. "It may be difficult to get into the Ville de Paris with a woman, especially with this Italian."

Paul interrupted me. "Yes, with an Italian who looks more like a strumpet than a duchess. However, that is no business of mine. Do just as you please."

I was in a state of perplexity. I had written to the Ville de Paris to retain our rooms, and now I did not know what to do.

Two commissionaires followed us with our luggage. I continued: "You might as well go on first, and say that we are coming; and give the landlord to understand that I have a—a friend with me and that we should like rooms quite by themselves for us three, so as not to be brought in contact with other travelers. He will understand, and we will decide according to his answer."

But Paul growled, "Thank you, such commissions and such parts do not suit me, by any means. I did not come here to prepare your apartments or to minister to your pleasures."

But I was urgent: "Look here, don't be angry. It is surely far better to go to a good hotel than to a bad one, and it is not difficult to ask the landlord for three separate bedrooms as well as a dining-room."

I put a stress on *three*, and that decided him.

He went on first, and I saw him go into a large hotel while I remained on the other side of the street, leading along my fair Italian, who did not say a word, and followed by the porters with the luggage.

Paul came back at last, looking as dissatisfied as my companion.

"That is settled," he said, "and they will take us in; but there are only two bedrooms. You must settle it as you can."

I followed him, rather ashamed of going in with such a strange companion.

There were two bedrooms separated by a small sitting-room. I ordered a cold supper, and then I turned to the Italian with a perplexed look.

"We have only been able to get two rooms, so you must choose which you like."

She replied with her eternal "*Che mi fa?*" I thereupon took up her little black wooden trunk, such as servants use, and took it into the room on the right, which I had chosen for her—for us. A bit of paper was fastened to the box, on which was plainly written, *Mademoiselle Francesca Rondoli, Genoa.*

"Your name is Francesca?" I asked, and she nodded her head, without replying.

"We shall have supper directly," I continued. "Meanwhile, I daresay you would like to arrange your toilette a little?"

She answered with a *mica*, a word which she employed just as frequently as *Che mi fa*, but I went on: "It is always pleasant after a journey."

Then I suddenly remembered that she had not, perhaps, the necessary requisites, for she appeared to me in a very singular position, as if she had just escaped from some disagreeable adventure, and I brought her my dressing-case.

I put out all the little instruments for cleanliness and comfort which it contained: a nail-brush, a new toothbrush—I always carry a selection of them about with me—my nail-scissors, a nail-file, and sponges. I uncorked a bottle of eau de cologne, one of lavender-water, and a little bottle of new-mown hay, so that she might have a choice. Then I opened my powder-box, and put out the powder-puff, placed my fine towels over the water-jug, and a piece of new soap near the basin.

She watched my movements with a look of annoyance in her wide-open eyes, without appearing either astonished or pleased at my forethought.

"Here is all that you require," I then said; "I will tell you when supper is ready."

When I returned to the sitting-room I found that Paul had taken possession of the other room, and had shut himself in, so I sat down to wait.

A waiter went to and fro, bringing plates and glasses. He laid the table slowly, then put a cold chicken on it, and told me that all was ready.

I knocked gently at Mademoiselle Rondoli's door. "Come in," she said, and when I did so I was struck by a strong, heavy smell of perfumes, as if I were in a hairdresser's and perfumer's shop.

The Italian was sitting on her trunk in an attitude either of thoughtful discontent or absent-mindedness. The towel was still folded over the water-jug that was full of water, and the soap, untouched and dry, was lying beside the empty basin; but one would have thought that the young woman had drunk half the contents of the bottles of perfume. The eau de cologne, however, had been spared, as only about a third of it had gone; but to make up for that she had used a surprising amount of lavender-water and new-mown hay. A cloud of violet-powder, a vague white mist, seemed still to be floating in the air, from the effects of her over-powdering her face and neck. It seemed to cover her eyelashes, eyebrows, and the hair on her temples like snow, while her cheeks were plastered with it, and layers of it covered her nostrils, the corners of her eyes, and her chin.

When she got up she exhaled such a strong odor of mingled perfume that it almost made me feel faint.

When we sat down to supper, I found that Paul was in a most execrable temper, and I could get

nothing out of him but blame, irritable words, and disagreeable remarks.

Mademoiselle Francesca ate like an ogre, and as soon as she had finished her meal she threw herself upon the sofa in the sitting-room. Sitting down beside her, I said gallantly, kissing her hand:

“ Shall I have the bed prepared, or will you sleep on the couch? ”

“ It is all the same to me. *Che mi fa?* ”

Her indifference vexed me.

“ Should you like to retire at once? ”

“ Yes; I am very sleepy. ”

She got up, yawned, gave her hand to Paul, who took it with a furious look, and I lighted her into the bedroom. A disquieting feeling haunted me. “ Here is all you want,” I said again.

This time I took care to pour half the water into the basin, and to put a towel near the soap.

Then I went back to Paul. As soon as I got into the room, he said, “ You have got a nice sort of camel there! ” and I answered, laughing, “ My dear boy, don’t speak ill of sour grapes,” and he replied, ill-temperedly:

“ Just take care how this ends, old man. ”

I almost trembled with that feeling of fear which assails us after some suspicious love escapade—that fear which spoils our pleasant meetings, our unexpected caresses, our chance kisses. However, I put a bold face on the matter. “ At any rate, the girl is no adventuress. ”

But Paul had me in his power; he had seen the shadow of anxiety on my face.

“ What do you know about her? You really astonish me. You fall in with an Italian woman traveling alone, and she volunteers, with most singular

cynicism, to accompany us; you take her to the first hotel you come to, and then you declare that she is not a ——! And you persuade yourself that you are not running more risk than if you were to go and spend the night with a woman who had small-pox."

He laughed, an unpleasant and angry laugh. I sat down, a prey to uneasiness. What was I to do, for he was right, after all?

He went on: "Do as you like, I have warned you, so do not complain of the consequences."

But I saw an ironical gayety in his eyes, a delight in his revenge, and he made fun of me so jovially that I did not hesitate any longer. I gave him my hand, and said, "Good night. You know the old saying: 'A victory without peril is a triumph without glory,' and upon my word, the victory is worth the danger."

And with a firm step I left him for the night.

I stopped short before the half-open door of Francesca's room in utter astonishment. She was already asleep. Weariness had overcome her as she finished undressing, and she was reposing in the charming attitude of one of Titian's women.

It seemed as if she had lain down from sheer fatigue in order to take off her stockings, for they were lying on the bed. Then she had thought of something pleasant, no doubt, for she had waited to finish her reverie before moving, and then, closing her eyes, had lost consciousness. A nightgown, embroidered about the neck such as one buys in cheap ready-made shops, was lying on a chair.

She was charming, young, firm and fresh.

There is nothing prettier than a pretty woman asleep, and in a moment, seeing her thus in all her



native charms, I was about to forget my friend's prudent counsels; but, suddenly turning to the dressing-table, I saw everything in the same state as I had left it, and I sat down, anxious, and a prey to irresolution.

I remained thus for a long time, not able to make up my mind what to do.

I had no thought of sleeping, for my head was too excited and my eyes too occupied.

I moved about without stopping, feverish, uncomfortable, nervous. Then I began to reason with myself, certainly with a view to capitulation.

I undressed slowly, and then stretched myself out against the wall, turning my back firmly on temptation.

In this position I remained for a long time without going to sleep, when suddenly my neighbor woke up. She opened her eyes with astonishment, and still with that discontented look in them; then, perceiving that she was undressed, she got up, and calmly put on her night-dress with as much indifference as if I had not been present.

Then, not troubling herself at all about me, she immediately went quietly to sleep again, with her head resting on her right arm.

As for me, I began to meditate on human weakness and fatuity, and then I went to sleep also.

She got up early, like a woman who is accustomed to work. She woke me by doing so, and I watched her through my half-closed eyelids.

She came and went without hurrying herself, as if she were astonished at having nothing to do. At length she went to the dressing-table, and in a moment emptied all my bottles of perfume. She certainly also used some water, but very little.



When she was quite dressed, she sat down on her trunk again, and clasping one knee between her hands, she seemed to be thinking.

At that moment I pretended to first notice her, and said:

"Good morning, Francesca."

Without seeming in at all a better temper than the previous night, she murmured, "Good morning."

When I asked her whether she had slept well, she nodded her head, and jumping out of bed I went and kissed her.

She turned her face toward me like a child who is being kissed against its will; but I took her tenderly in my arms, and gently pressed my lips on her eyelids, which she closed with evident distaste under my kisses on her fresh cheeks and full lips, which she turned away.

"You don't seem to like being kissed," I said to her.

"*Mica!*" was her only answer.

I sat down on the trunk by her side, and passing my arm through hers, I said: "*Mica! mica! mica!* in reply to everything. I shall call you Mademoiselle *Mica*, I think."

For the first time I fancied that I saw the shadow of a smile on her lips, but it passed by so quickly that I may have been mistaken.

"But if you never say anything but *Mica* I shall not know what to do to please you. Let us see; what shall we do to-day?"

She hesitated a moment, as if some fancy had flitted through her head, and then she said carelessly: "It is all the same to me; whatever you like."

"Very well, Mademoiselle *Mica*, we will have a carriage and go for a drive."

"As you please," she said.

Paul was waiting for us in the dining-room, looking as bored as third parties usually do in love affairs. I assumed a delighted air, and shook hands with him with triumphant energy.

"What are you thinking of doing?" he asked.

"First of all, we will go and see a little of the town, and then we might get a carriage and take a drive in the neighborhood."

We breakfasted almost in silence and then set out. I dragged Francesca from palace to palace, and she either looked at nothing or merely glanced carelessly at the various masterpieces. Paul followed us, growling all sorts of disagreeable things. Then we all three took a drive in silence into the country and returned to dinner.

The next day it was the same thing and the next day again; and on the third Paul said to me: "Look here, I am going to leave you; I am not going to stop here for three weeks watching you make love to this creature."

I was perplexed and annoyed, for to my great surprise I had become singularly attached to Francesca. A man is but weak and foolish, carried away by the merest trifle, and a coward every time that his senses are excited or mastered. I clung to this unknown girl, silent and dissatisfied as she always was. I liked her somewhat ill-tempered face, the dissatisfied droop of her mouth, the weariness of her look; I liked her fatigued movements, the contemptuous way in which she let me kiss her, the very indifference of her caresses. A secret bond, that mysterious bond of physical love, which does not

satisfy, bound me to her. I told Paul so, quite frankly. He treated me as if I were a fool, and then said:

“Very well, take her with you.”

But she obstinately refused to leave Genoa, without giving any reason. I besought, I reasoned, I promised, but all was of no avail, and so I stayed on.

Paul declared that he would go by himself, and went so far as to pack up his portmanteau; but he remained all the same.

Thus a fortnight passed. Francesca was always silent and irritable, lived beside me rather than with me, responded to all my requirements and all my propositions with her perpetual *Che mi fa*, or with her no less perpetual *Mica*.

My friend became more and more furious, but my only answer was, “You can go if you are tired of staying. I am not detaining you.”

Then he called me names, overwhelmed me with reproaches, and exclaimed: “Where do you think I can go now? We had three weeks at our disposal, and here is a fortnight gone! I cannot continue my journey now; and, in any case, I am not going to Venice, Florence, and Rome all by myself. But you will pay for it, and more dearly than you think, most likely. You are not going to bring a man all the way from Paris in order to shut him up at a hotel in Genoa with an Italian adventuress.”

When I told him, very calmly, to return to Paris, he exclaimed that he intended to do so the very next day; but the next day he was still there, still in a rage and swearing.

By this time we began to be known in the streets through which we wandered from morning till night. Sometimes French people would turn round aston-

ished at meeting their fellow-countrymen in the company of this girl with her striking costume, who looked singularly out of place, not to say compromising, beside us.

She used to walk along, leaning on my arm, without looking at anything. Why did she remain with me, with us, who seemed to do so little to amuse her? Who was she? Where did she come from? What was she doing? Had she any plan or idea? Where did she live? As an adventuress, or by chance meetings? I tried in vain to find out and to explain it. The better I knew her the more enigmatical she became. She seemed to be a girl of poor family who had been taken away, and then cast aside and lost. What did she think would become of her, or whom was she waiting for? She certainly did not appear to be trying to make a conquest of me, or to make any real profit out of me.

I tried to question her, to speak to her of her childhood and family; but she never gave me an answer. I stayed with her, my heart unfettered and my senses enchained, never wearied of holding her in my arms, that proud and quarrelsome woman, captivated by my senses, or rather carried away, overcome by a youthful, healthy, powerful charm, which emanated from her fragrant person and from the well-molded lines of her body.

Another week passed, and the term of my journey was drawing on, for I had to be back in Paris by the eleventh of July. By this time Paul had come to take his part in the adventure, though still grumbling at me, while I invented pleasures, distractions, and excursions to amuse Francesca and my friend; and in order to do this I gave myself a great amount of trouble.

One day I proposed an excursion to Sta. Margarita, that charming little town in the midst of gardens, hidden at the foot of a slope which stretches far into the sea up to the village of Portofino. We three walked along the excellent road which goes along the foot of the mountain. Suddenly Francesca said to me: "I shall not be able to go with you to-morrow; I must go and see some of my relatives."

That was all; I did not ask her any questions, as I was quite sure she would not answer me.

The next morning she got up very early. When she spoke to me it was in a constrained and hesitating voice:

"If I do not come back again, shall you come and fetch me?"

"Most certainly I shall," was my reply. "Where must I go to find you?"

Then she explained: "You must go into the Street Victor-Emmanuel, down the Passage Falene, and into the furniture shop at the bottom, in a court, and there you must ask for Madame Rondoli.—That is the place."

And so she went away, leaving me rather astonished.

When Paul saw that I was alone, he stammered out: "Where is Francesca?" And when I told him what had happened he exclaimed:

"My dear fellow, let us make use of our opportunity, and bolt; as it is, our time is up. Two days, more or less, make no difference. Let us go at once; go and pack up your things. Off we go!"

But I refused. I could not, as I told him, leave the girl in such a manner, after living with her for nearly three weeks. At any rate, I ought to say

good-by to her, and make her accept a present; I certainly had no intention of behaving badly to her.

But he would not listen; he pressed and worried me, but I would not give way.

I remained indoors for several hours, expecting Francesca's return, but she did not come, and at last, at dinner, Paul said with a triumphant air: "She has thrown you over, my dear fellow; it is certainly very strange."

I must acknowledge that I was surprised and rather vexed. He laughed in my face, and made fun of me.

"It is not exactly a bad way of getting rid of you, though rather primitive. 'Just wait for me, I shall be back in a moment,' they often say. How long are you going to wait? I should not wonder if you were foolish enough to go and look for her at the address she gave you. 'Does Madame Rondoli live here, please?' 'No, Monsieur.' I'll bet that you are longing to go there."

"Not in the least," I protested, "and I assure you that if she does not come back to-morrow morning I shall leave by the express at eight o'clock. I shall have waited twenty-four hours, and that is enough; my conscience will be quite clear."

I spent an uneasy and unpleasant evening, for I really had at heart a very tender feeling for her. I went to bed at twelve o'clock, and hardly slept at all. I got up at six, called Paul, packed up my things, and two hours later we set out for France together.

### III

THE next year, at just about the same period, I was seized as one is with a periodical fever, with a



new desire to go to Italy, and I immediately made up my mind to carry it into effect. There is no doubt that every really well-educated man ought to see Florence, Venice, and Rome. This travel has, also, the additional advantage of providing many subjects of conversation in society, and of giving one an opportunity for bringing forward artistic generalities which appear profound.

This time I went alone, and I arrived at Genoa at the same time as the year before, but without any adventure on the road. I went to the same hotel, and actually happened to have the same room.

I was hardly in bed when the recollection of Francesca which, since the evening before, had been floating vaguely through my mind, haunted me with strange persistency. I thought of her nearly the whole night, and by degrees the wish to see her again seized me, a confused desire at first, which gradually grew stronger and more intense. At last I made up my mind to spend the next day in Genoa to try to find her, and if I should not succeed, to take the evening train.

Early in the morning I set out on my search. I remembered the directions she had given me when she left me, perfectly—Victor-Emmanuel Street, house of the furniture-dealer, at the bottom of the yard on the right.

I found it without the least difficulty, and I knocked at the door of a somewhat dilapidated-looking dwelling. It was opened by a stout woman, who must have been very handsome, but who actually was only very dirty. Although she had too much *embonpoint*, she still bore the lines of majestic beauty; her untidy hair fell over her forehead and shoulders, and one fancied one could see her floating



about in an enormous dressing-gown covered with spots of dirt and grease. Round her neck she wore a great gilt necklace, and on her wrists were splendid bracelets of Genoa filigree work.

In rather a hostile manner she asked me what I wanted, and I replied by requesting her to tell me whether Francesca Rondoli lived there.

"What do you want with her?" she asked.

"I had the pleasure of meeting her last year, and I should like to see her again."

The old woman looked at me suspiciously.

"Where did you meet her?" she asked.

"Why, here in Genoa itself."

"What is your name?"

I hesitated a moment, and then I told her. I had hardly done so when the Italian put out her arms as if to embrace me. "Oh! you are the Frenchman; how glad I am to see you! But what grief you caused the poor child! She waited for you a month; yes, a whole month. At first she thought you would come to fetch her. She wanted to see whether you loved her. If you only knew how she cried when she saw that you were not coming! She cried till she seemed to have no tears left. Then she went to the hotel, but you had gone. She thought that most likely you were traveling in Italy, and that you would return by Genoa to fetch her, as she would not go with you. And she waited more than a month, Monsieur; and she was so unhappy; so unhappy. I am her mother."

I really felt a little disconcerted, but I regained my self-possession, and asked:

"Where is she now?"

"She has gone to Paris with a painter, a delightful man, who loves her very much, and who gives

her everything that she wants. Just look at what she sent me; they are very pretty, are they not? "

And she showed me, with quite southern animation, her heavy bracelets and necklace. "I have also," she continued, "earrings with stones in them, a silk dress, and some rings; but I only wear them on grand occasions. Oh! she is very happy, Monsieur, very happy. She will be so pleased when I tell her you have been here. But pray come in and sit down. You will take something or other, surely?"

But I refused, as I now wished to get away by the first train; but she took me by the arm and pulled me in, saying:

"Please, come in; I must tell her that you have been in here."

I found myself in a small, rather dark room, furnished with only a table and a few chairs.

She continued: "Oh, she is very happy now, very happy. When you met her in the train she was very miserable; she had had an unfortunate love affair at Marseilles, and she was coming home, poor child. But she liked you at once, though she was still rather sad, you understand. Now she has all she wants, and she writes and tells me everything that she does. His name is Bellemin, and they say he is a great painter in your country. He fell in love with her at first sight. But you will take a glass of sirup?—it is very good. Are you quite alone, this year? "

"Yes," I said, "quite alone."

I felt an increasing inclination to laugh, as my first disappointment was dispelled by what Mother Rondoli said. I was obliged, however, to drink a glass of her sirup.

“So you are quite alone?” she continued. “How sorry I am that Francesca is not here now; she would have been company for you all the time you stayed. It is not very amusing to go about all by oneself, and she will be very sorry also.”

Then, as I was getting up to go, she exclaimed:

“But would you not like Carlotta to go with you? She knows all the walks very well. She is my second daughter, Monsieur.”



No doubt she took my look of surprise for consent, for she opened the inner door and called out up the dark stairs which I could not see:

“Carlotta! Carlotta! make haste down, my dear child.”

I tried to protest, but she would not listen.

“No; she will be very glad to go with you; she is very nice, and much more cheerful than her sister,

and she is a good girl, a very good girl, whom I love very much."

In a few moments a tall, slender, dark girl appeared, her hair hanging down, and her youthful figure showing unmistakably beneath an old dress of her mother's.

The latter at once told her how matters stood.

"This is Francesca's Frenchman, you know, the one whom she knew last year. He is quite alone, and has come to look for her, poor fellow; so I told him that you would go with him to keep him company."

The girl looked at me with her handsome dark eyes, and said, smiling:

"I have no objection, if he wishes it."

I could not possibly refuse, and merely said:

"Of course I shall be very glad of your company."

Her mother pushed her out. "Go and get dressed directly; put on your blue dress and your hat with the flowers, and make haste."

As soon as she had left the room the old woman explained herself: "I have two others, but they are much younger. It costs a lot of money to bring up four children. Luckily the eldest is off my hands at present."

Then she told all about herself, about her husband, who had been an employé on the railway, but who was dead, and she expatiated on the good qualities of Carlotta, her second girl, who soon returned, dressed, as her sister had been, in a striking, peculiar manner.

Her mother examined her from head to foot, and, after finding everything right, she said:

"Now, my children, you can go." Then turn-

ing to the girl, she said: "Be sure you are back by ten o'clock to-night; you know the door is locked then." The answer was:

"All right, mamma; don't alarm yourself."

She took my arm and we went wandering about the streets, just as I had wandered the previous year with her sister.

We returned to the hotel for lunch, and then I took my new friend to Santa Margarita, just as I had taken her sister the year previously.

During the whole fortnight which I had at my disposal I took Carlotta to all the places of interest in and about Genoa. She gave me no cause to regret her sister.

She cried when I left her, and the morning of my departure I gave her four bracelets for her mother, besides a substantial token of my affection for herself.

• One of these days I intend to return to Italy, and I cannot help remembering with a certain amount of uneasiness, mingled with hope, that Madame Rondoli has two more daughters.